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TOP TENS

Some of our contributors' top ten (or so) things we've reviewed this month. For review consideration, send two copies of vinyl, or one copy of CD-only or demo releases to our PO Box. We review independent punk, garage, and hardcore releases—no major labels!

GRACE AMBROSE

- LEBENDEN TOTEN – live
- UNA BÈSTIA INCONTROLABLE – live
- SBSM / BLACK SPIRITUALS – live
- PLAYBOY – Celebration 12"
- WRETCHED – Libero e Selvaggio LP
- FOTZEN POWER GERMANY – EP
- THE PACIFICS – Quadrafenians EP
- TOTALOVE – flexi
- MOLAR – Ring EP
- SIDA – LP

MATT BADENHOP

- EXIT STANCE – 12"
- FOTZEN POWER GERMANY – EP
- NEWTOWN NEUROTICS – LP
- POLITICAL CRAP – Slow Death EP
- RATHAUS – 12"
- REMNANTS – live
- SMOKERS – live
- FUTURO – live
- NATURAL CAUSES – live

ARIELLE BURGDORF

- UNA BÈSTIA INCONTROLABLE / HEAT – live
- FUTURO / STERILE MIND – live
- NERVE QUAKES – A New State LP
- FOTZEN POWER GERMANY – EP
- EXIT STANCE – 12"
- NEWTOWN NEUROTICS – LP
- TAIWAN HOUSING PROJECT – LP
- WRETCHED – Libero e Selvaggio LP
- PROTEX – Tightrope LP
- FEMME KRAWALL – 10"

MITCH CARDWELL

- UNA BÈSTIA INCONTROLABLE – live
- STREET EATERS – The Envoy LP
- SLIME – "Controversial / Loony"
- DANNY BURK & THE INVADERS – 45
- PROTEX – LP + 45
- TROPICAL TRASH – EP
- PLAYBOY – Celebration 12"
- TAIWAN HOUSING PROJECT – LP
- IPPS – Life's A Mess LP

ROBERT COLLINS

- FISSURE – live
- FUTURO – live
- SMOKERS – live
- ANINOKO – live
- PISS TEST – 12"
- FUNDAMENTAL – live
- GOWL – Voltage Drop EP
- ASALTO – CS
- FAUX DEPART – CS
- DEFUSE – Cry Of Roar EP
- NURSE – Foreign Object EP

LAYLA GIBBON

- FOTZEN POWER GERMANY – EP
- TAIWAN HOUSING PROJECT – LP
- US WEEKLY – LP
- PLAYBOY – Celebration 12"
- MOLAR – Ring EP
- FLESH WORLD / RAYS / UNITY – live
- SUN BATHER – 12"
- WRETCHED – Libero e Selvaggio LP
- TOTALOVE – flexi

DAN GOETZ

- OBSTRUCTION – flexi
- TROPICAL TRASH – EP
- FOTZEN POWER GERMANY – EP
- FEMME KRAWALL – 10"
- FUCK YOU PAY ME – LP
- AYE NAKO – Silver Haze LP
- STREET EATERS – The Envoy LP
- CROOKED BANGS – II LP
- GRIT – Concrete Sea EP
- WHOOPERUPS – EP

GREG HARVESTER

- UNA BÈSTIA INCONTROLABLE – live
- SONGS FOR MOMS –12" + live
- PISS TEST – 12"
- AYE NAKO – Silver Haze LP
- DADAR – CS
- CITIZEN BLAST KANE – LP
- TROPICAL TRASH – EP
- PANDEMIX – flexi
- TEQUILA SAVATE Y SU HIJO BASTARDO – CD-R
- FUNERAL CONE / SBSM / ROHT – live

KENNY KAOS

- EASY HABITS – "Party King" 45
- THE PACIFICS – Quadrafenians EP
- THE OUTTA SORTS – EP
- CYANIDE PILLS – "Big Mistake" 45
- THE ESCALATOR HATERS – LP
- SLIME – "Controversial / Loony"
- EUREKA CALIFORNIA – Wigwam EP
- PROTEX – LP + 45
- DANNY BURK & THE INVADERS – 45
- POLITICAL CRAP – Slow Death EP

CAROLYN KEDDY

On the loose...

RAY LUJAN

M.I.A....

MARISSA MAGIC

- What We Like – live
- SEDIMENT CLUB – live
- THE DREEBS – live
- FOTZEN POWER GERMANY – EP
- PLAYBOY – Celebration 12"
- AYE NAKO – Silver Haze LP
- SIDA – LP
- TAIWAN HOUSING PROJECT – LP
- TROPICAL TRASH – EP
- RATHAUS – 12"

ROTTEN RON READY

- POLITICAL CRAP – Slow Death EP
- MUTANT ITCH / VIDEO FILTH – split EP
- RUBBLE – The Image EP
- F.I.T.S. – Feeding Illness to Society EP
- TOTALOVE – flexi
- FATIGUE – Scab EP
- OBSTRUCTION – flexi
- FUCK YOU PAY ME – LP
- NURSE – Foreign Object EP

FRED SCHRUNK

- SONGS FOR MOMS –12" + live
- AYE NAKO – Silver Haze LP
- NURSE – Foreign Object EP
- PROTEX – 45
- RUBBLE – The Image EP
- FOTZEN POWER GERMANY – EP
- PISS TEST – 12"
- PLAYBOY – 12"
- MYDOLLS – LP
- CFM – Dichotomy LP

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- MOLAR – Ring EP
- MANE – live
- MABS – live
- SIEVEHEAD – live

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ISSUE #409

Weird TV at Thrillhouse. "A real alchemical band." Photo by Martin Sorrondeguy.

We are looking for a new content coordinator. Do you enjoy proofreading and Italian hardcore? Accounting and UKDIY? Drinking bottomless coffee and blasting KBD singles?

Get in touch: mrr@maximumrocknroll.com.

FRONT COVER: Drawing of Thrillhouse by Courtney Dragge. Photos by Martin Sorrondeguy. From bottom left: the Vicious, Displeasure, I.R.A., Opt Out, Jump Off a Building.

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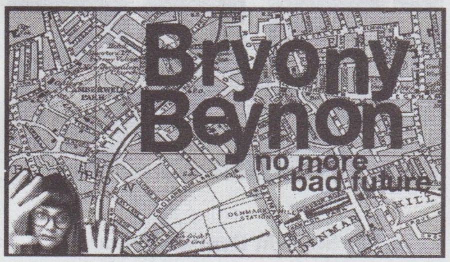


I decided to use this space this month to revisit some of the true twelve-inch howlers of days gone by. Yep, while "difficult second album" is a cliché across all genres, there's a certain type of unexpected turn that many punk and hardcore bands take which bears some examination, for good and for euw. Let's do it. One of the advantages of streaming culture these days is that records we may never have otherwise parted with cash for are given equal footing to the classics, so these are all out there. Even moreso, in an era of hype-specific genre delineations, hype to hype, dust to dust, there's something beautiful and revealing about the records that many groups who were once hugely popular made, especially when it meant nailing their coffins shut in the pursuit of innovation or indeed a foiled attempt at popularity… I welcome your theories as to why this used to happen much more than it does now, but it's never been a secret that punk often struggles on the LP format, providing as it does extra space for tasteless fuck ups where a two-minute perfect banger would never have showed such cracks. Nowhere is this truer than when it comes to the classic groups who stayed together through some extreme sonic chicanery, often with bravery, buffoonery and sometimes profoundly terrible results. Let's go pan for gold in the toilet of 1980s full-length records made by bands initially known for a different style:

SSD: Okay, this is an entry-level example of the genre as I feel most people are aware of this classic howler progression. There are two LPs to discuss here, technically: *How We Rock* in 1984 and then *Break it Up*, a glaring example of how negative feedback can backfire. *How We Rock* still has that vague hardcore aftertaste, with a pre-smack Springa bringing the throaty vocals and par-boiled riffs. What was up with Boston during this time? (SSD were not the only ones to take this path by any means.) Did they all get into rock at once as some type of arch response to the hyper-conservative Boston-eats-itself straightedge scene? Or was it an attempt to capitalize on metal's ascension in the charts? The latter I feel, but as plodding and turgid as it is laughable (Al Barile's endless scales masquerading as riffs seem to be stuck in a time loop) it's the vocals on *Break it Up* that make it truly offensive, sounds like Bon Scott with a throat full of bees. Horrendo.

***

DYS: So Modern Method was the Boston label that put out one of the best American post-punk records of the 1980s (Native Tongue's *Yowl*) and then jumped deep into peddling 12" turds for aforementioned SSD, the Freeze and my GOD, this self-titled by DYS, which for sheer bad rock, echoing vocals and bizarre stop start riffs has to deserve an entry. Perhaps Dave Smalley deserves credit for trying to fuse politically conservative views with punk *RAWK* twenty years before anyone else, or maybe a violent reprisal, your call.

***

MIDDLE CLASS: Middle Class are possibly my top example of this hard-turn strategy paying off in a big way, and unlike Blitz they didn't fuck it up afterwards. It seems as though neither the *Homeland* LP or their second EP *Scavenged Luxury* are as widely known about as they should be. These records also make pleasing sense as a progression. Middle Class is known for well, basically inventing hardcore with *Out of Vogue*, experimenting with mad speed while almost everyone else was still repurposing garage riffs with a snarl, but *Scavenged Luxury* goes off in a tick-tock insistently haunting direction, ripping off Wire without a note of pop resolution in a way that sounds like it came out last week (one of the songs on this EP is incidentally an exact template for the sound of current faves the Coneheads.) It feels like a lot had happened to them between '79 and '80. Then came the full-length. An interview with Jeff Atta (RIP) he says they had a full-length's worth of songs ready to go, then threw them all out after realizing that what they really wanted to capture was this obsession with Gang of Four and Joy Division. Whenever I hear a comment like that I tense up, imagining my response to a bandmate who offered that suggestion at the 11th hour, so it's testament to their intense genius that what they went for instead is a brilliant American adaptation of new wave glacial brooding, full of space, single notes and warbling anarcho-style bass riffs. It sunk at the time but truly deserves a listen if you like Mission of Burma or Lack of Knowledge.

***

BLITZ: You can file *Second Empire Justice* (1983) under sick-as-hell genre deviation LPs, and certainly one which ruffled some feathers, coming only a year after *Voice of a Generation*, and just through the natural fact that it was being thrown into the ever-accepting and open-minded Skin waters. This is another one which has seen recent reappraisal as a classic in its own right, dark ass synthesized post-punk with insistent bass, three years before Siekiera did something very similar on *Nowa Aleksandria*. *Second Empire Justice* has a similarly beautiful stepping stone between two wildly different releases as Middle Class did, giving us an insight into the progression in the form of "New Age," a song which might be one of my favourite punk songs of all time? It's come to something when it's possible to pogo and throw beer around while screaming "I love you mate!" to the person next to you, to a song with the lyrics "*I hold your color, when my vision is gone / this power is something but the force is blind / transmitted through a network, of your own kind / as minutes tick away and days become years / I know this old feeling / it's a substance in my tears*." Damn. *Second Empire Justice* doesn't have the bouncy bathos of "New Age" but makes up for it by being just as hooky and memorable. I wondered for a moment what the beautiful people of YouTube think of this record (and because my copy of it is 10,000 miles away) and I am struck by this summation: "Oi is too happy anyway who cares about working and drinking what about those sad days where u just wanna sleep in and jack off all day." Let's just gloss over the album which follows, called *The Killing Dream*, which sadly hurtles down another egregiously ropey path and is best forgotten.

***

DISCHAAAAARGE: OK, studded elephant in the room. I can't continue without talking about Discharge and *Grave New World*. *Grave New World* has been fully recuperated amongst the 'charge 'eads of today, but all sources

make very clear just how intensely this era of Discharge was roundly pilloried as cock rock at the time. Altogether now…*"Anger burning, anger burnneeeeiiing!"* An interview in *More Noise* zine a few years back with Cal noted that his reason for leaving Discharge and steering well clear of their reformations is that he didn't fancy being queer-bashed again, and the various stories of the *Grave New World*-era US tour and the crowd reactions to the (I quote) "gay glam shit" back this up—there are plenty of gig bootlegs from this tour if you want to hear this, yuck. There's even one where you can hear a 50 gallon trash can hit the stage as the crowd (ironically) chants for DRI. In conclusion, even the worst excesses of a band trying to go all Motley Crue are still less embarrassing than the 2017 reformation old man historical re-enactment society band wagon, so you know, who's laughing now?

***

UNIFORM CHOICE: Now, to *Staring into the Sun;* which is what I would rather do than ever listen to this 1988 LP ever again. I'm including this howler in tribute to my pal Katie who is steadfastly loyal to this seedy underbelly of Hardcore. As a woman who myself once owned three different Underdog t-shirts, I can deeply empathize. This time in this corner of hardcore was deeply odd, old mate Krishna had a strong footing, as did introspective warbling, Gibson SGs and troubling pop-rock tendencies. My theory is that not being socially allowed to smoke weed whist being in this space of intense hippy signifiers is what held back many of these straightedge groups from being able to put together something that wasn't completely unlistenable horseshit. I say this as someone who has a huge amount of time for shit like this, but it is *so* bad. Somehow skips around tempos constantly, and then there is the absolutely throttled production throughout. "Uniform Choice at their absolute best!" smiles a Youtube commenter through gritted teeth. Let go, sweet friend, let go. Sometimes we are betrayed and become stronger as a result.

***

ANTI-NOWHERE LEAGUE: My colleague in unflinching sewer music scholarship, Joe Briggs, turned me on to this interesting example of the genre, so full credit to him for this half hour of exposure therapy reminding me why I hate street punk. Anti-Nowhere League took a full five years to digress into Anarcho-Bono territory, proving on 1987 full-length *The Perfect Crime* that they were not in the least bit afraid to open their mouths and emulate the pop charts with massive choruses and background "yeaaah!'s" which are at a riot-inciting level of distance from their previous bozo street punk sound. Fully sounds like Toto at points…largely terrible but sometimes… slightly catchy? They would, it should be noted, go on to write (in 2006 for fucks sake) possibly the most unreconstructedly homophobic punk song ever written. (I won't name it but suffice to say, keep that X Ray Spex pun out of your mouth.) Their fear that gay sex will lead to the end of the human race seems like an interesting contrast to the views expressed in bestiality anthem "So What?", famously covered by Metallica. I would enjoy watching a street punk version of *Some Kind of Monster* to in some way understand what happened there. Verdict? *The Perfect Crime* is a window of creativity in an otherwise forgettable oeuvre. Here's hoping these cunts can die out with the dinosaurs.

***

VOID: Someone recommended *Potion for Bad Dreams* with a wry smile when I was young and Void was genuinely the wildest hardcore I'd ever heard, and it was upsetting to realize they had made this terrible error later in their life, so I tried to push it out. On relistening, it's actually a lot less shit than you'd think, but a serious step away from the hyperspeed rage genius of their previous efforts. My friend Sean summarised *Potion for Bad Dreams* as "Van Halen mixed with skiffle" and they're not wrong. Or maybe I've just been infected by seriously low standards after wading through so much sonic effluent in the process of writing this. I once had a man get in my face about St. Peter and upside down crucifixes while waiting for a bus at Chaos in Tejas, and some of the riffs on this later era full-length take me to a similar place emotionally. Attacked, amused yet mildly disgusted.

***

NO TREND: A band that was truly always on their own tip, and make it in here as a particular example of what it means to take a hard-turn into another genre when you are the type of band that's into blinding your audience with flood lights from day one. It could be suggested that if you start out as weird as No Trend did, then you'll never fall into the trap of producing something your fans can't stomp to. And yet even the deepest rebel acolytes must have limits. That limit, for me, No Trend superfan, comes at around the two minute mark of *More,* their unreleased Touch and Go LP which tests the very outer limits of this theory with unlistenable psycho ska. For real. Even their also-very-out-there previous record *Tritonian Nash-Vegas Polyester Complex* is MOR by comparison. It makes the Butthole Surfers sound like Dave Matthews Band. It makes that Uniform Choice record sound tasteful. Spank me with your love monkey, baby.

Send me your recommendations:
bryonybeynon@gmail.com

The Straight Dope on Fentanyl

Health officials, politicians and reporters have been talking a lot about fentanyl in the past year. Many people first heard about it when Prince overdosed on an analogue of the substance in 2015. Since then it has become the major culprit indicted in the over 500% rise in overdose deaths in the US in just a few years; a phenomenon that many states have declared a public health emergency. It's not just a problem in the US either. Canada, Estonia, Australia, Finland and Morocco have all had their own struggles with this powerful opioid, leading the UN to schedule it and its two active ingredients to their list of controlled substances just a few weeks ago.

Between 2006 and 2013, fentanyl was not commonly found on the tox screens of overdose victims; fewer than 3% of deaths per year in New York City involved fentanyl. But that rate has since skyrocketed in New York and all over the country. Nearly half (47%) of drug overdose deaths in the US involved fentanyl. This figure doesn't even include cases in which that cause of death was not yet determined, which is a lot.

Among the 1,319 confirmed opioid-related deaths in Massachusetts in 2015 where a toxicology screen was also available, 58% of them had a positive screen result for fentanyl. That number is expected to keep growing. Overall, there was a 68% increase in OD deaths between 2013–2015 in the state. Fentanyl has been a bigger issue on the eastern seaboard where heroin tends to be sold in its powder form. Tar heroin is more common on the west coast, and the consistency makes it harder to supplement with other substances, but it does happen. Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Ohio have all been hit particularly hard by fentanyl. In one Ohio county they have had to rent moving trucks to use as mobile morgues to handle the overflow of dead bodies.

I get a lot of questions about the prevalence of fentanyl and the subsequent rise in overdose

deaths. While I'm all too familiar with what an overdose on fentanyl looks like and its impact on my community, I realized that I don't know too much about its history. I have heard very conflicting reports about exactly what year or even decade that it began appearing in the heroin supply. The way it has been publicized has had a lot of people (including myself) duped into thinking this is a brand new phenomenon. But it's not. Fentanyl has been around for over half a century, and this isn't the first time it's found its way into dope bags. China White, the strain of heroin that inspired DeeDee Ramone's magnum opus, "Chinese Rock," once referred to the pure heroin that was coming out of China in the 1950s. But in the '70s, the China White DeeDee was shooting was actually more likely a mixture of heroin and fentanyl.

Cartels, dealers, and entrepreneurial scientists have all been blamed for the outbreak of fentanyl-laced heroin that started around 2013. Surely, drug suppliers are not blameless for their part in the massacre. Power, money, violence and corruption are all human factors which have contributed to the exponential rise in overdose deaths. But the untold story of the drug highlights the flaws and dangers in the system that not only permits, but creates the environment ripe for this magnitude of destruction. The driving force behind this and countless other public health emergencies boils down to the war on drugs and the laws of supply and demand. You may find it trite to open up a copy of *MRR* and read about the horrors of capitalism, but I can't help that all you've heard in lyrics over the years are true. I'm just another casualty of the invisible hand.

I won't bore you with the intricacies and statistics about the prison industrial complex and the war on drugs. I couldn't do that even if I tried. I am going to try to break down what fentanyl is and why this is happening with it as best I can. I'm merely a social scientist though and not some sort of, you know, actual scientist, so I am literally using layman's terms here. Don't expect a chemistry lesson from me. Anyway, to provide the necessary context, I should explain what happens during an overdose first. This will require a brief lesson in neuroscience, so please bear with me.

All mammals have opioid receptors in their brain which control and / or influence feelings of pain, pleasure, and (to a certain extent) addictive behavior. When someone takes a dose of an opioid, such as heroin or fentanyl, these opioids attach to the receptors in the brain like a magnet and block feelings of pain or discomfort. They can also cause feelings of euphoria. When they wear off it can cause the person to go into withdrawal and feel really, really shitty.

Opioids are both physically and psychologically addictive. If someone has a habit and they don't use after a few hours they are going to go through physical withdrawal which can last up to a week. But long term opioid misuse also fundamentally changes the physical structure and function of a person's brain, and these effects can last for a lifetime. Long term opioid use can cause imbalances in hormonal and other bodily systems, and it can also deteriorate the white matter in a person's brain. I don't really know what that means other than that it affects decision-making abilities, emotional regulation, impulse control, and reactions to stressful stimuli. There's a whole 'nother major contributing factor to addiction related to environmental factors and early emotional development, but that's a topic for another time. Suffice it to say, people use drugs because it fulfills some need for them.

While I'm off on this tangent I would also like to take this opportunity to make the distinction between opioids and opiates because people are always using the two terms as if they are interchangeable, yet the distinction is actually kind of important in this story. Opi*ates* are natural substances that are derived from poppy plants, including heroin, codeine, opium, morphine and a few other things I have never heard of. My understanding of the chemistry is basically that heroin comes from morphine which comes from opium which comes from the poppy plant. Up until fairly recently, opi*oids* referred to a fully synthetic form of opiates made by humans in a licit or illicit lab. This includes pharmaceuticals like methadone, demerol, dilaudid, buprenorphine, and you guessed it, fentanyl. But now the word "opioid" is used as an umbrella term that includes the entire family of opium-like narcotics, including natural (opiates), synthetic, and semi-synthetic painkillers. Semi-synthetic opioids like oxycodone, oxymorphone, and hydrocodone are made from a combination of naturally occurring opiates and opium-like synthetics. The important takeaway is that heroin comes from nature and fentanyl is created by humans.

Fentanyl is an extremely potent painkiller. It's the most powerful opioid that is used in human medicine. The strength of opioids are measured in something called MEQs, or Morphine Equivalent Units. Morphine, being the foundation of all opioids, is used as the baseline with which to compare other opioids. Oxycodone, a common prescription opioid used for pain relief, is one and a half times stronger than morphine. Methadone is two to three times stronger. Heroin in its pure form is four to five times stronger than Morphine. Fentanyl is fifty to one hundred times stronger than Morphine.

Fentanyl was first developed in 1959 by Janssen Pharmaceuticals. It entered the prescription market in the 1960s as an intravenous painkiller called Sublimaze as an analogue to Demerol. *(If any nascent peace punk or D-beat bands out there are looking for a band name I just gave you two. You're welcome.)* Fentanyl is not effectively absorbed via ingestion so it wasn't viable outside of a hospital setting until the 1990s when it was developed into a patch you could put on your skin under the brand name Duragesic. This first prescription form of fentanyl was intended to treat chronic pain in terminally ill cancer patients as a means of palliative care. It's still in use today and since then it has been developed into several different varieties of delivery including sublingual tablets, lozenges, and lollipops. Yes, fentanyl lollipops.

Fentanyl has a rapid onset and only lasts a short duration (aka "it has no legs"). So that means that if you are accustomed to using heroin as your opioid of choice and you suddenly switch to something that doesn't last as long, you would have to use more frequently to keep from getting dopesick. For example, someone who might use heroin three times a day might have to use fentanyl six times a day to keep from getting sick.

The rapid onset of the drug means that overdoses occur much more quickly than they used to. Whereas with straight dope people frequently overdose half an hour to up to two hours after their shot, people are overdosing on fentanyl pretty instantly—often within just a few seconds. In some cases, it also causes something called Chest Wall Rigidity also known as "Wooden Chest Syndrome" in which a person's chest muscles completely seize. This makes it really difficult for a person to breath, for anyone to perform rescue breathing, and for anyone to perform CPR on them if need be. I don't think anyone knows exactly why this happens, but it's really scary to see. I have seen people use fentanyl and pretty immediately collapse, grab their chest, and lose consciousness within less than 30 seconds. It looks very different from a traditional heroin overdose which happens much more gradually.

Fentanyl that was found in the US heroin supply prior to 2013 was illegally diverted from pharmacies. It was around 2013 that drug dealers began synthesizing it on their own. This is the process by which it enters the drug supply:

China is the originator of nearly all Fentanyl and Fentanyl precursors. Fentanyl in both its finished and prefab forms are shipped from China to Canada, the US, and Mexico in its powder form where it is processed. Some of the powder is cut into counterfeit pills using pill presses also purchased from China. Much

of it is processed in Mexico and smuggled into the US in pill form. Some fentanyl precursors come directly to the US and are manufactured in illicit labs here. The precursors may also be shipped to the US, shipped to Mexico for manufacturing, and are then smuggled back into US for sale. May be pressed into pills too. Powder fentanyl is either mixed with heroin, sold straight up as "heroin," or pressed into pills. Some fentanyl also comes through the Canadian border to the Northeast US.

The drugs are shipped via USPS or public mail service. USPS does not require tracking info but UPS and FedEx do. There has been a bill sitting in the senate that would mandate USPS to require tracking info in order to help stop drug smuggling. If it does ever pass it will likely backfire, like most other attempts to regulate the drug trade while keeping drugs illegal.

So how does the drug war play into all this? In order to produce heroin, you need lots of time and lots of resources. You need fields, water, irrigation systems, soil, and workers to grow and harvest poppies. Then it still needs to be processed in a lab. It's extremely labor intensive and expensive. It weighs a lot and takes up a lot of space. As you can imagine, this makes it difficult to get over borders. Fentanyl, in contrast, is purely synthetic. You don't need the immense amount of time and resources to create it and the results aren't dependent on growing conditions or location. And because it is so much more potent than heroin, you need only a small fraction of this stuff to get the same effects as a bag of heroin. You can get more bang for your buck and create a lot less risk for the cartels who transport it. One gram of pure fentanyl can be cut into 7,000 doses to be cut with heroin or really whatever other additive to be sold on the street. Additives could include acetaminophen, baby powder, Benadryl, benzos, quinine, cocoa powder, coffee powder and tons of other substances. A few people told me recently that they thought their dope was cut with cocaine, but I don't know how much truth there is to that. I do know that while cocaine use has gone down in the past decade, deaths involving cocaine have gone up due to people mixing it with fentanyl instead of heroin.

Technically speaking, it is not actually heroin that presents the greatest risk for overdose. It's the purity or the "cut" that is the major factor that determines the risk of overdose. The uncertain purity of heroin is far and away the number one determiner of overdose. If heroin was 100% pharmaceutically pure, like it is in places where it is medically administered, people would know what they were getting and would be able to dose appropriately. In fact, not a single overdose death has occurred within Sweden's heroin-assisted therapy system, which administers 100% pure heroin and has treated thousands of people since its inception in 1994.

When fentanyl started making its rounds in the heroin supply a few years ago, I heard of some people who would seek it out for a killer high. Media reports would have you believe that when a rash of deadly heroin is reported that all of the dope fiends come crawling out of the woodwork to seek it out. I have not found this to be true. In fact, two years into the current fentanyl outbreak I find it to be quite the opposite. But I wanted to know exactly what the community thought about it, so I distributed a short survey to fifteen long-time heroin users. The format was seven open-ended questions. Participants were compensated with two Hershey Kisses.

This information is clearly anecdotal; my little study doesn't have enough power to be statistically significant, nor does it represent a wide swath of the country, just a few savvy dope users in the Northeast. However, I still think that qualitative accounts from several experts in the field of drug-use are quite valuable. Out of the fifteen respondents, only six said they felt confident they would be able to find heroin without fentanyl in it if they tried. In fact, lots of people who are using what they believe to be heroin are passing drug tests or failing to get into detox programs because their urine is testing clean for heroin. At this point, even when people think they are using heroin it oftentimes turns out that the dope they are using contains no heroin whatsoever. When asked what users liked about fentanyl, more than half responded in some variation of "nothing." Some people said they liked that it was potent and a good high. One person said "Strong as fuck. Pretty much a guaranteed good high if you don't go out." When asked what they don't like about it, the answers varied. One person said that it has no legs on it, one person said they didn't like the taste, and one person said that it doesn't last long enough and they get sick faster. Most respondents mentioned risk of overdose as a reason for disliking it. One respondent volunteered, "Its killing all my friends, help!!!". Most of the respondents said that they can tell heroin and fentanyl apart by the taste, smell, and color. This freaks me out because a lot of people all over the Northeast have recently reported that there is some sort of light brown substance or dye that is being added to their dope to make it look more like heroin instead of fentanyl.

Taking the temperature of drug-users attitudes two years into this epidemic has shown me that people's feelings are ambivalent at best, and that the majority of heroin users are concerned about the heightened risk of overdosing on fentanyl. Many people who have field-tested both heroin and fentanyl now greatly prefer the former, but the irony is that it's impossible to find pure heroin; the safer of the two options.

The criminalization of heroin and now fentanyl has already inspired dangerous innovations. China finally banned the manufacture of fentanyl, but several fentanyl analogues with varying strengths, like U-47700, the substance implicated in Prince's untimely death, have popped up in China in order to stay ahead of the law. An even newer drug being diverted to the streets is a large-animal tranquilizer used in zoos called Carfentanil. It is 50,000–100,000 times stronger than Morphine. There are government health warnings out which warn people against even touching or being in the same room as Carfentanil. It has already caused 700 fatalities in states including Ohio, Michigan and Florida

Rather than curtailing the overdose rate, the criminalization of heroin creates much more risk for users. The drug market is extremely elastic and is not going anywhere anytime soon. In fact, it's only growing despite the increased overdose rate. As long as the demand exists, there will be suppliers willing to do whatever it takes to meet that very lucrative demand.

Questions, comments, ideas, and fan art: dearauntiehazel@gmail.com

I guest-hosted on the all-local music show at one of the non-commercial radio stations here in town a few weeks ago, where I got to play some of my most-loved records by Portland bands past and present and talk about some of the projects that I'm involved with, which always makes me way more nervous and uncomfortable than it probably should. The most panic-inducing question that I was asked had to do with Portland's current post-punk scene, and specifically how I saw my own band DR. IDENTITY fitting into it—my first thought was essentially, "Well, *do* we actually fit into it?" The whole "dark punk" aesthetic has reigned supreme in Portland for years, and there's a well-established scene

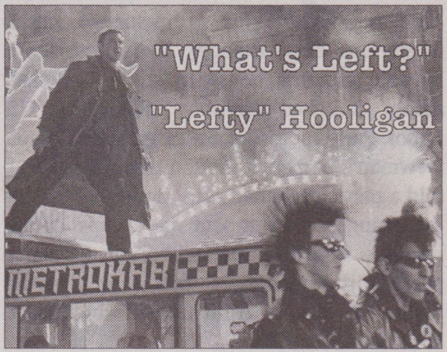
of bands pulling their influences from goth / deathrock or the more aggressive, hardcore-inspired corners of the post-punk, but that's definitely not us. The best I could offer is that there is a certain community of newer bands here that we feel a connection with and that we tend to play a majority of our shows with, and one of the things that I appreciate about the group of local bands that we're most closely aligned with is that on a basic level we don't sound that much like one another. And really, when I think about the historical post-punk scenes that have had the greatest influence on me personally, it wasn't the ones with a dozen or so bands all operating on the exact same musical wavelength—it's PYLON coming out of Athens house parties with the B-52s and R.E.M., or JOSEF K and the FIRE ENGINES co-existing in Edinburgh, or even the WIPERS / NEO BOYS bills that were commonplace in late '70s Portland.

I'd place the BEDROOMS in whatever orbit of the contemporary Portland underground that my band is operating within, and they're by far one of my favorite groups in the loosely-defined local post-punk scene of my imagination that might not be as easily codified by or visible to people outside of the city. They put out a four-song cassette called *Dystopian Futures* late last year, with the sort of shimmering and shadowy atmosphere that wouldn't have been wildly out of place within the rosters of early '80s 4AD (minus the dour goth leanings) or Factory Records (except much more warmly melodic). Steady no-frills drumming, hypnotic bass hooks intersecting with stark guitar, and quietly forceful and dramatic echo-tinged vocals—think SIOUXSIE AND THE BANSHEES for the 21st century basement punk set and you'll be getting close. The way that vocalist Jen shifts from detached monotone to a desperate cry on the haunting slowburner "Sex Negativity" even reminds me a little bit of underrated Scottish femme-punks FLOWERS, putting a gauzy, soft-focus blur on the typical post-punk ideal of sharp lines and high contrast. Doomtown's alright, y'all. (thebedroomsxoxo.bandcamp.com)

Danger Records has been rescuing some of the most crucial records from the vaults of late '70s / early '80s Euro femme-punk for a few years now (their reissues of PLASTIX, ANIMALS + MEN, and LUCRATE MILK are a pretty solid trifecta), and they're back at it with a new LP collecting recordings from "insane West German all-fräulein post-punkers" TRÜMMERFRAUEN that were previously only available on a 1986 cassette released in a beyond-micro edition of 40 copies. As far as musical creation stories go, "cool punk girls who don't know how to play instruments start a band together regardless" is one that has never really let me down, and TRÜMMERFRAUEN are no exception. Three women in the Rhineland find each other in 1979 as the result of an advertisement seeking members for a feminist punk group, they learn their way around their respective instruments as they go (eventually bringing in a fourth fräulein on synth), and over the course of about two years, they record some perfectly skeletal and trebly DIY post-punk clatter with titles like "Vibrator" and "The Decline and Fall of Male Myth". The squealing synth, sparse tom-centered drumming and insistently chanted vocals on "Arbeit" and "Glasaugen" suggest a much less electronically-inclined spin on the dark *Neue Deutsch Welle* vibe of their German contemporaries MALARIA!, but I'm especially partial to TRÜMMERFRAUEN's spikier KLEENEX-like moments (see: "Gelbkreuz" or "It's A Blackout") where the guitar is at peak scratchiness, the girl-gang vocals are breathlessly shouted, and everything sounds like it's perpetually on the verge of falling apart. Seriously, is that or is that not the dream? (Danger Records, dangerrecords.bandcamp.com)

Another equally great, just-surfaced archival collection from post-punk's golden era is C/Site Recordings' anthology LP for Welsh *Messthetics* darlings REPTILE RANCH, who wound up in Cardiff after running away from the post-industrial decay and economic depression of south central Wales. If "cool punk girls who don't know how to play instruments start a band together regardless" is my favorite musical narrative, REPTILE RANCH exemplify a gender-neutral variation on that origin backstory that is also near and dear to my heart: small-town weirdos take inspiration from the prevailing "*it was easy, it was cheap, go and do it*" / "*this is a chord, this is another, this is a third, now form a band*" mindset of the early punk movement and start their own projects to help build the groundwork for the sorts of tightly-knit regional DIY scenes that thrived from about 1978–82. In this case, the small-town weirdos wrote a letter to SCRITTI POLITTI (maybe you're familiar with a song of theirs called "Messthetics"), who responded with all of the information that any underground upstarts would need in order to self-release their records, and REPTILE RANCH's Z Block label was born. The histories of REPTILE RANCH and their Cardiff neighbors YOUNG MARBLE GIANTS are closely intertwined—YMG contributed two early songs to Z Block's first release (the *Is the War Over?* compilation LP) and Spike of REPTILE RANCH would later go on to form the breezy pop trio WEEKEND with Alison Statton—and in a sense, REPTILE RANCH were the slightly more spiral scratched counterpart to YOUNG MARBLE GIANTS' severe, minimalist post-punk. The up-front bass, warbling organ and sparse drumming on tracks like "Saying Goodbye" isn't very far removed from the basic *Colossal Youth* blueprint, by way of the DESPERATE BICYCLES' shouty and shambolic approach to econo-punk that basically defined UK DIY as we now know it. An absolutely essential record for all enthusiasts of the hastily cut-up and cheaply Xeroxed musical contributions of late '70s/early '80s art-damaged oddballs. (C/Site Recordings, csiterecordings.com)

Say hey at ripitupstartagain@gmail.com. More sights & sounds at futuresandpasts.org



My friend's a tankie.

A tankie is someone who supported the old Soviet Union when it was around, and still supports existing "socialist" states like China and Vietnam, their client states like Nepal and North Korea, or their affiliate states like Serbia and Syria. Tankies are usually Communist Party Stalinist hardliners, apologists, fellow travelers, or sympathizers. They back the military interventions of Soviet-style states, defend such regimes from charges of human rights violations, and desire to create similar political systems in countries like Britain and the United States.

It's more accurate to say an acquaintance I knew from way back when wants to "friend" me on FB, and I'm not sure I want to accept the request because he's a tankie.

My friend Garrett was originally a fellow New Leftie when we met at Ventura Community College in 1970. He was a member of New American Movement, an organization founded to succeed Students for a Democratic Society. NAM was structurally decentralized, politically quasi-Leninist, equal parts democratic socialist and socialist feminist, with a special interest in Antonio Gramsci. Garrett was an assistant professor who, when the voting age was reduced to 18, organized a bunch of us under-21 antiwar youngsters to run for Ventura city council and school board.

When I went off to UCSC as an undergraduate junior transfer in 1972, Garrett got a teaching gig at UCB. I visited him a few times in Berkeley while he was an associate professor. It was the height of ideological battles and street fights between Revolutionary Union Maoists, Draperite Trotskyists, Black Panther Party cadre, *et al*, in Berkeley from 1972 to 1975. Ostensibly, Garrett taught courses on neo-Marxism—covering thinkers like Lukács, Marcuse, Gorz, and Kołakowski—but he was a hardcore Trotskyist by then. I didn't know which of the 57 varieties of Trot he subscribed to by the time I moved with my girlfriend down to San Diego to attend graduate school at UCSD in 1976. But when I visited Berkeley in 1979, after that girlfriend and I broke up, Garrett had gone off the deep end. He'd been relieved of his professorship under mysterious circumstances, lived in a loose Psychic Institute house in south Berkeley, avidly followed Lyndon LaRouche's US Labor Party, and was obsessed with Joseph Newman's perpetual motion machines. I was told a particularly bad acid trip accounted for the changes. Garrett sent me a copy of the headline from the Spartacist League's party paper in the summer of 1980, soon after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, which read: "Hail Red Army!"

I had almost no contact with Garrett for the next thirty-seven years. I moved to the Bay Area in 1991 and briefly glimpsed a bedraggled Garrett walking along the sidewalk while I drank coffee at the old Cody's Bookstore glassed-in cafe sometime around 1993. I asked after him whenever I came across Trotskyists—SWP, ISO, BT—tabling at events, but most had no idea who I was talking about and those who did avoided my eyes. One day in early 2002 I ran into a familiar face from Ventura's anti-war movement, a woman named Carlin, who said Garrett had moved to Chicago, where he was now a day trader. And that's how matters stood until I got Garrett's friend request on my FB profile fifteen years later.

I could only suss out so much from Garrett's FB wall without actually confirming his friend request. His profile picture was conservative enough—his bearded visage in a suit and tie—but his cover photo was of a pro-Russian poster from East Ukraine done in a Soviet socialist realist style with armed partisan soldiers circa 1918, 1941, and 2014 captioned in Cyrillic which translated into "The fate of the Russian people, to repeat the feats of fathers: defend their native land." There was a pro-China post calling the Dalai Lama a CIA agent, and a pro-Russian post supporting Assad as Syria's only chance for peace. A meme proclaimed "Hands Off North Korea" with a smiling, waving image of Kim Jong Un, while another meme featured a slideshow of neoconservative talking heads under the banner "Children of Satan." There was a link to a video decrying Israeli war crimes against the Palestinians, and another to a weird video featuring Putin and Trump dancing to the Beatles "Back in the USSR." His FB info confirmed that he resided in Chicago and dabbled in stock market trading, and when I googled him I learned that Garrett had once been arrested and spent time in prison. But I learned nothing about the charges, the sentence, or the time served, only that he had made several failed attempts to void the conviction through *habeas corpus* filings.

His criminal past was no problem. His tankie tendencies were.

We acquire our friends throughout our life, from where we live and work to begin with, but then from communities of shared interest and activity. The former are friends by circumstance, and the latter friends by choice, or so we tell ourselves. The fact is it's far more complicated. For much of my life I made friends at work, school, or where I lived, allowing the context of my life at the moment to determine who my friends were. As a consequence I made friends who were frequently racist, sexist, homophobic, or completely lacking in political sensibilities, if not outright conservative. But when I consciously engaged in political association and activity, I also let the circumstance of my politics determine who I befriended. So while I made much of belonging to anarchist affinity groups where I shared political theory and practice with people I considered friends, ultimately my political engagements determined who I associated with and befriended. Such people might share my politics, and might not be overtly racist, sexist, homophobic, or what have you, but they were often cruel or stupid or angry or lacking in empathy. Indeed, given that the political fringes are overwhelmingly populated by individuals who are socially lacking and psychologically damaged, my pool of potential friends had serious problems from the beginning.

Because of our propensity to make friends based on the context we find ourselves in, that old aphorism about "choosing one's friends wisely" seldom applies, especially when we realize that we rarely know anybody very well and that people are constantly changing. I might not consciously decide to befriend the rabid Maoist whose bloodthirsty calls to "liquidate the bourgeoisie" or "eliminate the Zionist entity" irk me no end, but I might also start to admire and have affinity for him as we work together politically. And stories of political adversaries who become fast friends despite, or perhaps because of their battles with each other are legion. The mechanisms of how we become friends might be somewhat capricious, but surely we can decide whether to remain friends once we've become buddy-buddy?

Let's take an extreme example to make the resulting conflicts obvious.

I once had a passing acquaintance with crypto-fascist Boyd Rice. My loose affinity group of anarchist friends in San Diego put out four issues of a single sheet broadside style 11x17 @ zine called "yada, yada, yada" circa 1979. One of the issues was called the "dada yada" because its theme was surrealism and dadaism, and it involved one of our group, Sven, collaborating with Boyd Rice and Steve Hitchcock to produce. The rest of our affinity didn't contribute to or much approve of the project, although I did meet Boyd and attended a performance of an early version of his band NON with him playing rotoguitar. I was disturbed by the fascist imagery and symbolism so prominent in the industrial subculture of the day, in which Boyd seemed to revel. But when I argued with Sven against his association with Boyd, he argued back that you should never end a friendship simply over political differences. This was before Boyd Rice augmented his fascist flirtations with a virulently racist social Darwinism and an involvement in Anton LeVey's Church of Satan. Whenever people ask me whether Boyd and I were ever friends, I assure them I wasn't.

I should have realized that the position that one's personal affection for an individual trumps whatever political conflicts exist is just a roundabout way of saying "hate the sin, but not the sinner." And when we fail to point out the sin to the sinner, we are in danger of becoming complicit in defending the sinner's sin by being silent about it. Few of us are brave or honest enough to tell our friends exactly what we think of them, often because we don't want to lose their friendship, go out on an emotional limb, or do something personally uncomfortable. So we do a disservice to those victims of racism or fascism when we make excuses for our friends, when we treat their racism or fascism as merely "points of view" rather than aspects of their behavior with real consequences for real people.

But aren't we all human beings? None of us are wholly good or purely evil. Individual humans are multifaceted and complex, with good and bad qualities which are frequently combined so deeply together that it's almost impossible to characterize any one individual as just one thing. Therefore we should give people, especially our racist or fascist friends, the benefit of the doubt because "they are human and have feelings too" and none of them are "bad people." Actually, we should be glad they're human because we want them to

suffer when we take away their power to act on their racism and fascism. We want them to suffer because change means suffering. But if we're not willing to confront our racist and fascist friends, if we're unwilling to challenge the power behind their racist or fascist behavior no matter how casual or flip, perhaps it's time to stop being their friends.

I was familiar with anarchist / libertarian crossover politics, but the Boyd Rice incident was the first time I encountered Left / Right crossover politics as part of punk, itself rife with "transgressive" countercultural crossovers. I hadn't been aware of the original dada / surrealist crossover, with Evola and Dali trending ultraright and Buñuel and Breton trending ultraleft. Left / Right crossover politics seem to be the idiocy *de jour* however, with everything from National Anarchism to Steve Bannon calling himself a Leninist. I'm afraid that Garrett's pro-Assad, pro-Kim Jong Un, pro-Putin tankie politics have much the same flavor, an implicit Red / Brown crossover with allusions to LaRouche and blood libel.

I think I'll pass on Garrett's friend request.

PERSONAL PROPAGANDA
Personal blog: gamatiasz.wordpress.com
Political blog: leftyhooligan.wordpress.com
Facebook: facebook.com/georgematiasz
Writer: facebook.com/gamatiasz
Publishing: facebook.com/62MilePress
Publishing website: 62milepress.com

i don't think that i need to sit here with you fucking dildos any more

by Imogen Binnie

What the fuck even is punk? I know it's been more of a joke than a real question for at least a couple decades now, because who the fuck knows and because it's a bunch of different things and also because who fucking cares. You know it when you see it. It's a word that gets misused a lot—I've written before about how much I hate the bro music critic who's like "this band is introducing better production / clean singing / no more politics / whatever, but they are still punk and maybe even punker than other bands who sound and do punk because isn't it the punkest thing a band can do to disregard the rules of punk," because no, that is not the punkest thing a band can do. It's fine to not be punk but, uh, I don't want to completely blow your mind out the gate in the first paragraph of this month's column, but I feel confident that it's not punk to not be punk. We know that much.

I'm thinking about this stuff though because here I am, continuing to write for this punk magazine, when in practice I can't remember the last time I was a drunk teenage boy with glue in my hair being obnoxious to strangers on purpose. My life is hella boring and I don't even have an active band right now. But I did a thing recently and while it could not possibly matter less whether it is a punk thing, it feels like it's in line with whatever spirit it is that animates this punk stuff—or probably, more accurately, DIY stuff.

I mentioned a couple months ago that I started a trans women's group. We meet every two weeks in the evening, which blows because like I said my life is hella boring and I'm working like fifty hours a week right now so I don't have the time or energy to do anything. But I needed to. I probably don't have the space to describe to you what it's like to be a trans woman without trans woman community, so just imagine never seeing anyone like you. Like, anywhere—with the exception of the occasional cruel caricature. Now imagine that you internalized before you were old enough to be critical of it the idea that this was right and good—that even if you were to get to exist when you grew up, it would be predicated on your being the only person like you anywhere. Then imagine spending a lot of your life trying to convince yourself that this was okay and even right or moral, that it was *your* fault that if you felt a harrowing disconnectedness from other human beings.

Now imagine that you feel a harrowing disconnectedness from other human beings.

I started a trans women's group with the cartoonist Joey Sayers in the East Bay like ten years ago. I forget the specific circumstances that led to us starting it—maybe Joey was saying something about how there were a couple trans groups in the bay but mostly they blew and were run by cis or trans guy spectrum people who had the same weird ideas about trans women that everybody else seemed to, and we were like "shit, I guess we have to start one."

Soon after we started it I was like "we should have a name. Something like The East Bay Trans Ladies' Book Club and Nonviolent Potluck Militia, but shorter and better in every way," and then nobody could think of a better name, so for two years we had this group called The East Bay Trans Ladies Book Club and Nonviolent Potluck Militia. The name was terrible, but the group was awesome. I mean sometimes half of us would be excited to bring in their makeup collections and talk about it while the other half of us had bike grease and scabs on their faces and sat there uncomfortably, because trans women are different from each other. It was almost always weird. But it was also the kind of community that makes you realize just how much you'd been needing something you'd never even thought to conceptualize.

Imagine finding human beings who you didn't feel harrowingly disconnected from.

Anyway what I can tell you about is the broader circumstances of starting that group. I'd been living in the Bay for a while, I'd been broke, working in bookstores and trans IRL for a couple years, and every time I went to a queer thing it felt like it was by and for cis women and trans guy spectrum people. But it was a *queer thing* and I was trans—and therefore queer, and therefore, I had believed, queer things would be for me—but it felt like there were always two trans guys performing pieces about their genders, two cis women performing things about how their attraction to trans guys was queer, and, occasionally, me performing, like, a Poison song.

I've written about this before and I hate writing about it because I still feel angry and hurt so I won't say any more about it but it felt awful, some stuff happened, and I got to the point where I realized that that no matter what people said, that community just wasn't there for me. It was lying when it said "LGBT"—it was a community with its roots in the lesbian / womyn / no-trans-women-yes-trans-guys communities of yore. Some of the people there might be nice or care about trans women but ultimately, no matter how much lip service they paid to it, that community had never existed for trans women and probably never would.

I got to a super bummed place and started having some pretty negative thoughts like "why the fuck do I feel entitled to having a community at all" which is intense for a number of reasons including the fact that one of the most popular ways jerks who hate trans women have for making trans women feel like shit is to be like "men are entitled and so are you therefore you're men." But which also is true. I wasn't part of creating that community. Why should it be for me? I mean. It should because people were saying it was for me. But those people hadn't been involved in creating that community either—they'd inherited it. So whatever to that. The point is, it led me to being like fine, fuck it, let's start our own thing.

So we started our own thing.

When you start your own thing, you should probably take a pretty serious inventory of your own capacities and abilities, so—like I do in most of my projects—I figured out the version of a thing that would take the least amount of work on my part: a biweekly meeting.

I ended up questioning a lot of the shit I'd internalized from this culture about trans

women, and I started asking questions about what our lives might look like. It's probably not a coincidence that the book *Whipping Girl* came out around that time. A lot of us were having a really hard time with the way we were conceptualizing trans lives and looking for new perspectives. It's also when I started writing this novel *Nevada* which did pretty well, which tries to do a similar thing—to show what trans women's lives are like in order to open up possibilities about what they could be like. And this is the kicker—when that book came out, a couple years after I broke up with the queer community, that same community came back around to me.

It's pretty wild. I mean look. I'm friends with a lot of queers, I was through this whole thing, I just really struggle with the loneliness I've always felt at queer things. (Mostly at the ones that trans women aren't in charge of.) But we have a relationship. I've said that me and that community are exes. They invite me to do readings, or to blurb books, or play shows or whatever. I was never going to be fit in on their terms, but once I figured out my own terms and laid them out in a way that made sense and people were able to understand where I was coming from—once I was able to name these differences so that I could stop getting all steamrolled by them, suddenly I was the person who isn't looking for a relationship any more and everybody wanted to date me.

Not bragging. I'm just kind of a babe.

Ultimately where this is going is that I think you can draw a parallel between this little parable and punk stuff. I mean, everybody agrees that most punk stuff blows. But there's some incredible shit that continues to happen which has its roots in punk, or hardcore, or metal or crust or whatever, which is actively working to name and address the shit that sucks about those things so we can move forward without having to invent everything from scratch. I mean, I don't think that a bunch of young feminist identified cis dudes working in the Black Flag paradigm are going to turn punk into something else, but bands like Ragana and Groke (RIP, I think? I hope not) and Loone and Paper Bee (none of these bands might conceptualize themselves as punk at all, I don't know, I'm making this whole thing up as I go, I don't really know or think anything about anything) and I bet a million other ones I don't know about are making their critiques clear by doing awesome things on their own terms which are indebted to other things—they've all got drummers—but which also are trying not to recreate the mistakes of their forebears.

We probably need more of that in the world right now. I guess the obvious question at the end of this is: how do you challenge the assumptions of what constitutes punk without turning into something other than punk. And I guess I don't really have an answer? But I bet as long as you're doing it yourself, keeping it anticapitalist, and positioning yourself against oppressive cultural norms—and using drums—you're probably not that far off from whatever it is that's still good at the heart of this godforsaken piece of shit subculture.

Also who cares. Fuck being punk.

ENDNOTES:

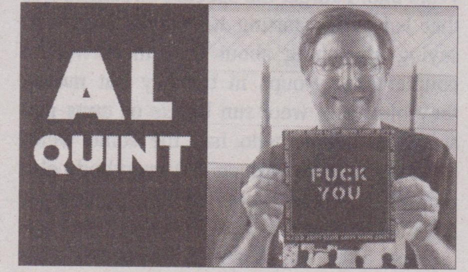
1) This is important: I think it's pretty rare for any of this stuff to happen online. You have to do things with your friends in real life. That's why laptop EBM or whatever isn't punk. Sorry.

2) Rest in peace and power Jenna RN. We still miss you.

3) You. Hey you. Don't kill yourself. I'm serious.

4) This is an account of one white and class privileged trans woman. As much as it can feel tokenizing and patronizing to put this in separately, it's true and needs to be said: a lot of similar, parallel, and neither similar nor parallel work on conceptualizing and reconceptualizing trans identities was going on in communities of color. Pay black and brown trans women to tell you about it.

5) I also can't really speak to the experience of being a trans guy in those womyn's communities or yore, but I imagine it involved getting to acknowledge some of the complexity of being trans that trans women aren't allowed to acknowledge because while gender complexity in trans guys is often framed as heroic, gender complexity in trans women is generally framed as "you're a fuckin man." I don't want to talk about it.



Not too long ago, I was going through some digital photos on my computer. I first started using a digital camera at shows in 2004 and it boggles my mind at the number of bands I've seen over the years. It also makes me a bit sad because the number of DIY shows in these parts has dwindled to next to nothing—at least the ones I know about. A bit over three months into 2017 and I've been to a grand total of three shows this year. Sure, there are club shows I could have gone to but it's not the same as a basement show. Even the shows at the Cambridge Elks aka "Hardcore Stadium" (kind of a stupid name but don't tell my friend who came up with it—oops!) lack intimacy and I always think about how it would have been *so* much better in a basement space. It serves its purpose, of course.

One of the folders was for the Chicago Fest in 2005—three shows, twenty-eight bands, including thirteen (!) on the Saturday show. I don't think I'd have the stamina to watch that many bands these days, although the lineups were stacked—REPOS, who played all of eight to ten minutes and it's still one of the best sets I've seen in this century. DIRECT CONTROL, PUNCH IN THE FACE, SIN ORDEN, CAUSTIC CHRIST, SIGNAL LOST, CONDENADA, MUNICIPAL WASTE, and the STATE, to name just a handful.

I mention the STATE because I have a strong emotional bond to that band. My late, great friend Jane moved to Ann Arbor, MI in 1983 to attend the University of Michigan. She quickly immersed herself in the hardcore scene out there, seeing all the great bands like NEGATIVE APPROACH, NECROS, etc. She submitted scene reports and live reviews for my zine, which was called *Suburban Punk* at the time. She sent back flyers—a favorite was one with Edith Massey (AKA Edie The Egg Lady) from the John Waters movies for a NEGATIVE APPROACH show. By the way, Edie had her own punk / new wave band called (naturally) EDIE & THE EGGS. Their single "Punks, Get Off The Grass" is a semi-enjoyable novelty tune and she proclaims herself Queen of Punk. That's a lot better than the other song, an awful cover of the FOUR SEASONS's "Big Girls Don't Cry," that ended up one of those Rhino "Worst Records of All Time" compilations. I'd say your life wouldn't be lacking if this record isn't in your collection.

Where were we? Jane's reviews…they were hilarious and brutally honest. Her review of the final MISFITS show at the time started with *"Groan. This is the kind of show that leaves you asking yourself the question 'was this really worth $6.00?'"* She didn't suffer fools gladly and didn't always have the highest opinions of certain people in the Detroit punk scene. In her letters, she would regale me with stories about certain individuals who irked her. Occasionally, she'd send along a record. One was the *No Illusions* 7" by the Ann Arbor band the STATE. It blew my fucking head off the first time I heard it and still does to this day. It's mean-sounding, it's raw, it's angry. I've prattled on endlessly over the years about the greatness of *No Illusions* and it pretty much holds its own against the best that area had to offer (OK, besides the NEGATIVE APPROACH EP, which is untouchable). Even

though it was repressed on Havoc in 2005, I still think it's overlooked. I don't really like the remix they did for the reissue but it's still a scorcher and is a pretty cheap record (although the first pressing goes for a lot more). They even came back and made some killer records in the 2000s, especially their 2006 album *All Wrong*. I gave it a pretty glowing review in this column and on my blog, saying that I didn't think the reunion wasn't a cash-in but "*based on a desire to rage once again.*"

Whenever I take out *No Illusions*, I always think of Jane and how I'll never completely come to terms with her sudden, violent death on 9/11/01. When I saw the STATE for the first time, at the Chicago Fest, there was definitely an emotional tug. After the set, I introduced myself to their vocalist Preston Woodward and told him about how Jane had sent me the record and how much it meant for me to see them play. He looked a little confused but said he appreciated it. Then, after I reviewed *All Wrong*, I got a letter from Preston that said:

... thank you for the kind & insightful MRR *review of our LP. I think you are right that we are trying less to cash in than to voice our outrage...The weird concept of our band is a kind of chaotic political expressionism, that turns out not necessarily PC, nor even coherent at times. "The soul is in chaos: so, too, be your song." (Alcaeus)...I am sorry about Jane. Both* (guitarist) *Art* (Tendler) *and I were quite moved by that. I feel that if she went to school in Michigan, I must have known her, or least seen her at shows. We were unaware of this inside connection to terror and the feeling is somewhat akin to a knife in the gut. Punk has so many fatalities. That is part of what steers us, energizes us to be very alive and to be real."*

Hardly your typical dashed-off note—I had to look up who Alcaeus was (a Greek poet from the 6th century BC). I don't usually think of Greek verse when listening to "Subvert" or "All Wrong" but he obviously drew some inspiration from it.

That's one of the things I always enjoyed the most about this punk rock thing—the personal connection, the mutual respect, having something tangible to reflect on. I hadn't remembered the letter from Preston until taking out the record for the first time in awhile. Little treasures lurk inside those record sleeves—postcards from Ian MacKaye, a letter from Rollins after I saw BLACK FLAG for the first time and dropped them a line or various set lists. I was posting some photos of old demos and one was by the CONFLICT from Arizona. I said it was one of the first demos I ever ordered (and reviewed) and that I got thanked for it on the insert of their subsequent 12". That might have been the first time that happened. I tagged their vocalist Karen in the photo and she said the thank you list was fun to put together and she kept most of the correspondence. So I'm not the only one!

Enough of the stroll down memory lane. I don't live my life *completely* dwelling on the past. There are records to review! Two Sacramento bands, RAD and the CROISSANTS have hooked up for a split 7". The two bands are quite different stylistically yet it works. RAD are back with eleven songs of trebly hardcore with no breaks and they do it with a lot of precision, with hairpin tempo shifts. Ten originals—before you finish reading the title of the song, they're on to the next—plus a well-done cover of JERRY'S KIDS "I Don't Belong" that's longer than the rest of the tracks put together. The songs are laced with humor as well as rage. Lory's vocals have an endearingly-sarcastic cadence. The CROISSANTS offer noisy, melodic buzzy, fuzzy punk that's pretty rockin.' "Everyone's A Rocker" sounds like a slowed-down minimalist take of the RAMONES' "I Just Wanna Have Something To Do," accompanied by a rhythm machine (or it sounds like it). (Sacramento, sacramentorecords.com)

VIDEO FILTH have become one of the hottest live bands in Boston over the past year or so and their latest, a split release with Fresno's MUTANT INCH, proves that out pretty well. Brian's a soft-spoken guy but his vocals are harsh and guttural and it's matched with the band's meatgrinder Swedish-influenced hardcore. MUTANT ITCH have an ear-damaging sound that's part noisy Japanese hardcore, part DISORDER / CHAOS UK-frenzy with the vocalist's emanations basically being *AAAAAAAAGGHH*, as it says on the lyric sheet. (Dark Raids, darkraidslable.storenvy.com; Ignore Rock 'n' Roll Heroes, 867 Broadway, Brooklyn, NY 11206)

I really miss the Boston band BLOODKROW BUTCHER. Their vocalist (and original drummer) PJ Kuda moved to NYC a few years ago and now slings the axe for URCHIN. Their debut 7", *How To Make Napalm*, offers four, crudely-produced raw'n'ravenous D-beat ragers. Well-trod territory, pro-forma, by the book but well-done. The back sleeve provides step-by-step instructions on napalm-making, although it looks like they improvise a bit. Hope the authorities won't be paying them a visit. (Roachleg, 1085 Willoughby Ave, #104, Brooklyn, NY 11221, roachleg82.bigcartel.com)

HVAC are another nasty NYC band, albeit in a slightly different vein i.e. they're not D-beat devotees but still play in a savage and visceral style on their *Mentality* demo. After a tribal-type intro, "The Fuckening," they kick into overdrive with a full-on blitz and shrieking, ranting vocals. They bash their way through the songs with a blunt aggressiveness, working in thrash and more pounding elements. (hvacnyc.bandcamp.com)

The Philly label / distro World Gone Mad is involved in a pair of hot releases. S-21, from that city's fertile scene, serve up some thumping punk rage on their *Year Zero* EP. It's a big lower-end sound, with bass-lines and drums that rattle the earth, a searing twin-guitar attack and Cella's angry, semi-muffled vocals, expressing the pointed lyrical sentiments about racism and state-sanctioned oppression.

Speaking of earth-rattling, the two releases from Panama's HEZ do just that—their self-titled 12", which had a recent pressing of 305 copies (already gone but maybe some of 'em are still out there in the wild) and a tape with two new tracks, "Problemas" and "Derrota," along with the ten songs from the 12". Got that? This is some kick-ass stuff—a darker sound with reverb-laden ranty vocals, a big and thick guitar/bass tandem and floor-shaking drumming. Inspiration appears to be drawn from RUDIMENTARY PENI, KILLING JOKE, Spanish bands like INVASIÓN and DESTINO FINAL and some of the recent Mexican scorch like TERCER MUNDO. (World Gone Mad, worldgonemad.bigcartel.com; s-21.bandcamp.com; hez666.bandcamp.com)

As long as we're talking about fertile music scenes, Melbourne, Australia continues to turn out great bands at a rapid clip. UBIK's demo and MOD VIGIL's self-titled 12" are two recent examples. UBIK have a tuneful post-punk meets anarcho-punk sound. Ash's vocals have an engaging quality, with a passionate cadence. One song is about a right-wing Australian crank named Andrew Bolt, who seems to be a racist, down under counterpart to the Breitbart acolytes that pollute the political stream in this country. A stirring message and stirring, sharply-played music (ubikpunk.bandcamp.com)

The cover of MOD VIGIL's disc is a tribute to the sleeve for GANG OF FOUR's debut 7" *Damaged Goods*, adding a few scientific symbols. They definitely have a semi-angular post-punk pulse in their sound, with the nervy, jabbing guitars but it's a punkier attack. Surging and stinging, accompanied by nasally, distorted vocals, driving a hole through your skull with the driving "Trout Casualty," "Driving Is Easy," and "Bad Day," while "Rare Au Pair" has a stop-start moodiness to it. "K-Hole" provides rhythmic, whirlwind frenzy. This is the band's debut—no previous demo or 7", jumping straight to the 12" format and it's a bold splash. (X-Mist, xmist.de)

X=, from Pennsylvania, have a number of releases under their belt, dating back to

2012, but their *5 Walls* 12" is the first I've heard. Impassioned hardcore with lyrics that look at the state of the world, sometimes in straightforward fashion, sometimes a bit more obliquely. A mish-mash of fast hardcore, more melodic compositions (such as the ear-grabbing "Body of Evidence") and some songs that stretch into a rock-meets-FUGAZI vein, as with the title track. Makes me think of some of the late '80s / early '90s hardcore bands where they were moving into more tuneful realms. It's not 100% successful but there are stirring moments. Beautifully-packaged in a screened sleeve with a screened lyric book and on clear vinyl. Only 100 of 'em, too. (exequals.bandcamp.com)

Finnish band VIVISEKTIIO were around the in '80s and got back together in 2008. Their latest 7", *Ydintalvi* ("Nuclear Winter") is a power-packed outing. Four old-school Scandi-core rippers plus the more melodic, gothy title track, which is actually the highlight. An urgent, spirited male / female vocal tandem, along with the full-on musical attack. (multi-label release; band contact: vivisektio83@gmail.com)

Al Quint, PO Box 43, Peabody, MA 01960, subvox82@gmail.com, subvox.blogspot.com, sonicoverload.net

Fuck, it's been a tough couple of months. Nothin' good going on in the records department or the personal life department to speak of, but the ship seems to be righting itself now somewhat. That being said, I gotta give a big 'ol "what the fuck" to 2017 punx! I haven't come across an exciting new release in like two months! Get up and make some fuckin' noize (punk) already! To reflect that sad fact, this month's column is dedicated to reissues only, where there have been some big developments.

Number one with a bullet has to be the HUMAN GAS discography bootleg LP on Record. Don't be fooled, there is a competing bootleg that came out slightly earlier with shittier sound and none of the supplemental materials this reissue contains, so make sure you're picking up this one. Long a feature of rabid Japanese hardcore fans' wantlists due to the preposterously hard-to-find split EP with STALIN ISM, HUMAN GAS emerged from the small town of Honbetsu, far to the north of the northernmost Japanese island (Hokkaido), marking them as very provincial and quite isolated from the Japanese punk scene as a whole. Beginning their recording career in 1985, HUMAN GAS developed an impressively chaotic and aggressive sound from the very start, clearly influenced by CONFUSE and the stable of British bands that they share DNA with (DISORDER primary among them, of course). HUMAN GAS cultivated a metallic edge as well, perhaps inspired by G.I.S.M., but just as likely drawn from UK bands like MOTÖRHEAD as DISCHARGE. The thin recordings are an unfortunate side effect of the circumstances under which they were forced to record, but a poor recording can hardly stifle the incredible venom this band delivered.

The most immediately arresting element of the band is the aggressive vocal, as much shrieked and shouted, even when the tempo moderates and it is supported by more traditional backing vocals. The quality of the riffs and solos is undeniable. While the riffs are firmly rooted in contemporary Japanese hardcore punk, the soloing is clearly influenced by the nascent thrash-metal movement, whammy-bar abuse and all. Juxtaposed with the vicious vocals and bare-bones arrangements they're hugely effective. The rudimentary drumming and bass accompaniment keep the songs firmly grounded, guaranteeing this as a hardcore classic and not a proto-metal record. This LP collects both HUMAN GAS demo tapes, the tracks from the STALI NISM split and three tracks from an unreleased 1987 studio sesison, offering up all the HUMAN GAS recordings save four compilation tracks from the *Street Punk in Obihiro* cassette that replicate demo tracks and the live recording from a 1987 VHS tape of a Sapporo gig. It also includes an excellent insert with a history of the band and their recordings, along with reproductions of the demo and record sleeves and inserts and some amazing grainy photos of the band performing, all encased in a high-quality glossy sleeve with great graphic design throughout. This is an absolute must-have, as the original materials will set you back a couple of grand easy and the sound quality here is vastly superior to the digital copies floating around online.

Amazingly enough, there's another recent mid-'80s metallic Japanese hardcore reissue that could make a case for being just as crucial as that quality HUMAN GAS reissue! Italy's F.O.A.D. records challenge hard with their high-end reissue of the QUEST OBJECT PROJECT (Q.O.P.) *It's Danger 1983-1986* LP. This is a re-release of the second Q.O.P. demo, or cassette album, featuring re-recordings of all eight of their previously released songs along with two additional tracks, making it a complete document of all ten tracks the band recorded in the studio. This is a hell of a lot more metal in the mix than the HUMAN GAS stuff, much more in line with contemporaries like GASTUNK and WARPAINTED CITY INDIAN in terms of the clean vocals and studio recording quality. The elaborate finger-tapping solos and high-pitched clean vocals might not appeal to every punk, but those who carry the flag for records like *Dead Song* and the *Devil Must Be Driven Out With Devil* compilation will recognize it as the lost treasure that it is. This album is a document of a phenomenon that I have long been fascinated by, which is the unity demonstrated between the Japanese hair metal / Visual Kei scene and the hardcore punk scene, which existed in stark contrast to the enmity between those two scenes in the US and Europe. One can learn a lot more about this crossover by tracking down the Japanese metal issue of *Evil Minded* zine (issue #7, a bargain at any price). This phenomenon is best demonstrated by the L.O.X. album, which saw members of LIP CREAM and X (JAPAN) collaborating with the singers of bands like DEATH SIDE and TETSU ARREI. That being said, Q.O.P., for all their clean sound and potential commercial appeal are a great example of the style themselves, being a DIY band in the hardcore vein, playing gigs with bands like SYSTEMATIC DEATH and the LOODS, billing themselves as "metal punk" on their flyers and self-producing their recordings. The LP itself is brilliantly designed, with a slick obi strip and a fat insert that does an amazing job of telling the story of the band solely through reproductions of flyers, tape inserts and a short clipping from *Doll* magazine. This is a huge hit for F.O.A.D., who also have a double LP reissue of material from the much more punk MAD CONFLUX dropping soon that looks pretty fucking crucial as well.

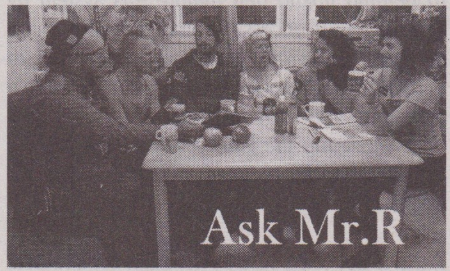
Hey, fuck you, this is the Pogo 77 section of the column! In addition to newly aggressive release schedule of the best of contemporary Japanese street punk and (some) hardcore, the label has launched a flexi series called *Killed by Pogo 77* to reissue cool demos from the '90s and beyond, in deluxe packaging including posters. The first two releases of the series are the CATTY WITCH *Les Enfants Terrible Du Punk* flexi and the ADDICTION *Footprints of A Desperado*. CATTY WITCH were a female-vocal '77-style punk band who

made very few recordings but appeared on many, many bills in the late '90s / early '00s. The bratty vocals give this a bit of an X-RAY SPEX feel, that almost verges into Riot Grrrl territory when the arrangements get loose. Most of this is straightforward punk though with "Droog" as particular highlight, feeling like the SPEX covering MINOR THREAT's cover of "Steppin' Stone," if that makes sense at all. The poster isn't very well designed, but the tunes are fuckin' great and well worth the reissue.

I assume most of the people who read this column would be familiar with the ADDICTION, as their records were very well distributed back in the day and can easily be found even now for very few bucks relative to a lot of Japanese stuff. These six tracks from '98 are top-tier stuff for them, with a raw recording that does nothing to diminish the pogo-able quality of the tunes. There's a bit of a hardcore edge to a couple of tracks (like "Spiky Kids are Innocent") but most of this is straight-up speedy street punk of the highest order, comparable to bands like OXYMORON or early the UNSEEN. This flexi features much better graphic design than the CATTY WITCH record, complete with a sweet six-panel fold-out poster featuring a very fetching picture of the band being all handsome and punk. This may very well be the best record in the ADDICTION's discography, with not a dud in the bunch unlike some of the later EPs or especially the fairly sub-par LP. Fans of WHO KILLED SPIKEY JACKET? would absolutely love this shit.

Oh hey, a non-Japanese reissue! Can it be? It sure fuckin' can! How about the NEBENWIRKUNG *Fick den Pabst* EP. Originally issued under the title *Gewalt* ("Murder") because "Fuck the Pope" was far too controversial for West Germany circa '84, this is a nasty platter of hardcore that joins the aggression of DISCHARGE to the unhinged "*Aaaahhh*" vocals of DISORDER (check out "Chaos"—it's one of the best DISORDER songs that DISORDER didn't actually write). It's not quite as disciplined as the SCAPEGOATS or VORKREIGSPHASE, but it's definitely in that tradition of German hardcore, just wilder and thrashier. Motor-mouth vocals, 1-2 drums with occasional D-beats, catchy riffs and that classic European clean bass that really drives the sound à la BGK. Threat From the Past records did an okay job with this reissue—the design is weak but the original insert is reproduced on nice glossy paper and the sound is massive. While I'm on the subject, the members of SCAPEGOATS "reissued" their *Kopflos* EP in that they found somehow some of the original pressing on red vinyl that never made it out and released them with a bunch of limited covers. It's a massively underrated record in the canon, and one well worth seeking out. Also, please check out my review of the UPSET NOISE reissue later in the magazine, as that's another budget-friendly repress of a fucking amazing hardcore classic.

Well punx, before next issue we'll have experienced Manic Relapse fest right here in the Bay. I'm hoping it's the kick in the ass I need to get thrilled about today's punk, and I bet seeing bands like MEANWHILE, SYSTEM FUCKER, and PISSCHRÏST alongside younger bands like KARBÖNITE, HUMANMANIA, and LANGUID will be just the fuckin' thing. I promise a full report next month along with a couple of new bangers courtesy of bands like RUBBLE and FUTURA. Until then...send beer! C/O *MRR* or agunderwood@gmail.com.



I don't think anyone should take advice, but there are probably a lot of things for the punks to talk about, and we might as well do it here. Think of it more as an opinion *column though. (And if we need a tagline for that I hope it can be something as vague as: "A column for people who are intrigued by subtle differences between the 'punks' and the 'punx.'")*

I recently moved to a big Midwestern city without an incestuous scene but as it turns out, with all the crossover, this place is still small. And, what makes it worse, I think one of the popular girls doesn't like me anymore.

Can you believe I'm even saying that? I can't! It's almost too embarrassing to even write! But here's the thing: people seem to be scared of her and take her opinion as some sort of gospel. She's a cool badass just also viciously, viciously mean. Some people from her band had beef with my band and blah blah blah now I think I'm on her bad side. I would mind less if I didn't just move here but she kind of holds a lot of power and now I fear I've fallen "out of favor." This would be less of a deal outside of a punk scene scenario but welp you know how it is—not very different from high school.

I've seen a lot of folks eyeroll about her shenanigans when she's not around, but when she is, they cower. What should I do? I don't think our bands can play together anymore and when I see her at shows her attitude's weird and it makes me wanna leave.

Being new is sooo fucking confusing. Supposedly the general rule for causing the least amount of friction as a new person in a community or workplace, or whatever kind of existing social structure you could be thrust into the midst of, is before you decide you know exactly what is happening or try to claim a space as your own, you take at least a month or so seeing how it's already operating, you take time to contribute to the existing structures, figure out what its needs might be, or what improvements could be made by you, and then contributing everything you can based on that new knowledge. How long have you been in the city? Do you think you're getting your social cues correct? Showing up in a scene and acting big and puffy is a bad look.

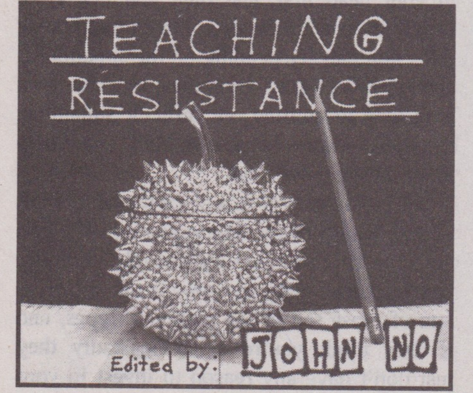
Not to *Seinfeld* you or anything, but I think the "blah blah blah" in this letter might be the thing that changes my response from one thing to another. Like, I gotta ask—is the "blah blah blah" beef with your band actually justified? Cause if this alleged beef they have with y'all is related to some kind of toxic behavior that you or your bandmates are perpetrating then I have to say the only cure for your situation is to spend some time examining your actions and reactions before beginning to address your issues in the ways in which they need to be addressed. Call outs don't need to be bad and embarrassing forever. Maybe that is what you mean by being vicious? You can definitely take the time to get frustrated and resentful in your head first, and then you just gotta follow it up with the deep breath and honest reflection part. Depending on the situation of course, reflections / apologies, etc. can go a long way to chilling out difficult situations. But, yeah, I know "blah blah blah" could be a lot of different stuff too.

When you're new to a place it's hard to tell exactly what's happening to you socially. You could be being treated legitimately different, just for being generally new if the person is one of those top of the mountain types, and if they think you're behaving badly they just don't have any reason to invest in your friendship as of yet. It'll probably dissipate after you've been around consistently and contributing positively to all of the everyday background life stuff for a while, which is honestly the only answer for a problem like this. Show up, and don't make people feel like shit. It'll get better eventually.

Unless the problem here is that the person in question is actually just an asshole. Which might explain the permissive behavior of the

other people in the scene who already know *how she is.* There are always people in our communities and families that we know are crummy or vindictive, and we're either just used to the behavior, or we're working really hard to keep the person at arm's length in order to avoid actually having to do anything about them or ending up on their shit list (i.e. "This is my shitty uncle, yes, he's always like this [racist / boisterous / emotionally demanding], and I just started ignoring it so that I don't have to deal with him [telling me about his politics / tearing me apart to my mother / asking to borrow money that he won't pay back], it's a pain in my ass"), and it perpetuates negative social structures! I'm not sure what it is about people that allows us to look up to bullies (attempted security from the very same bullies? If you can't beat 'em, join 'em?), but it is a very common phenomenon. A problem with these people in the punk scene also being considered "badass[es]" is that they are even less likely to be told or held accountable for their shitty behavior. A thing that it might be helpful to think about now is that if you are vying for positive attention or friendship from this person that will probably never come, you can stop trying now. You'll save yourself the trouble of measuring yourself by their judgment for the next decade. You don't have to be friends with everybody.

Unpopular opinion: Not all punks are cool! Send a text / phone call to 510-585-HELP with all your questions, opinions, tips, and whatever else to be answered within the pages of Maximum Rocknroll! *Very exciting…Send in email form to: askmrr@mail.com.*



Few subjects demand modern revision and de-centering / de-prioritizing in schools as much as the broad range of topics under the umbrella of The Classics and "Western Civilization"—the study of Greek and Roman antiquity, and the Roman Empire's Latin language. This field of study has a long reputation as stale, regressive, and Eurocentric / colonialist in focus, a reputation that stretches back hundreds of years. However, as with the teaching of any historical subject, the key for radical educators is to encourage resonant critiques of the dominant narratives; to find the cracks in the historical façade, help students in their efforts to widen and examine them, and then plant seeds so beautiful subversive weeds can grow from these static academic monoliths as they crumble. Additionally, when it comes to Latin, understanding this ancient language can help students to understand the root elements and grammatical conventions of most Western European languages, very much including English, and can thus serve as a powerful tool in promoting literacy.

This month's Teaching Resistance is by Tom Oberst, a Latin teacher in London. In the context of the United Kingdom, the study of the Classics has long served to reinforce strong class divisions. Tom has dedicated himself to helping upend and update this system by making Latin accessible and resonant to all students, especially those who have had to deal with the business end of colonialism; a task that implicitly includes critiquing and deconstructing the Classics from the ground up. Tom can be reached at taoberst@gmail.com.

Latin is not often seen as the basis for a radical approach to education. Historically it has been the preserve of the elites, and as a result ancient Italian, Greek, Egyptian, Tunisian, Spanish, and Arabic men and women are presented to most Latin classrooms as straight, white men. It's normally seen as a privileged or elite subject which supports colonialism, racism, totalitarianism and other damaging hierarchies. On top of this, the new history curriculum in the UK is whitewashing Britain's past and the Classics is at risk of becoming a part of this. However, myself and many of my colleagues fighting to keep Latin and the Classics in state schools see it quite differently: as a liberating subject which young students can use to deconstruct and critique modern assumptions and orthodoxies.

In the early 20th Century, as the state began to take responsibility for providing education to all children, Latin was taught at around a quarter of state maintained schools. A large reason for this was the desire to allow the highest attaining students to prepare for the Oxford and Cambridge entrance exams for which you needed to know Latin or Greek. This changed in 1960, when both universities dropped this requirement in a bid to widen access. This significantly diminished the amount of state schools which taught Latin, as it was seen as surplus to requirements. In a bid to counter this trend, a group of Classicists, influenced by Noam Chomsky's new theories on universal grammar, made extensive efforts to open the Classics up to all. Even now, despite being taught in more state schools than private schools (although there are more students in private schools studying the subject), it's an uphill battle. There is a definite movement of teachers, lecturers, and enthusiasts who are working towards this goal, but lack of funding from the last two governments has caused schools to sideline non-core subjects.

There are many misconceptions about Latin's usefulness which have been challenged by research over the past 40 years. New textbooks and methods of teaching, new programmes, exam boards, theories and approaches to the Classics have allowed Latin to be taught in a way that benefits all students rather than just an elite few. However there are barriers on the ground. A lack of governmental funding for schools has meant that Latin is often only used by school leaders to entice middle-income parents or to stretch "Gifted and Talented" (G&T) students. Below I'll outline a few ways in which we can, and are, keeping Latin and the Classics interesting, critical and subversive in state education.

If Latin is taught in state schools it is often taught to those deemed G&T. Whilst the term in general does not take into consideration the broad range of factors contributing to students' academic proficiencies or attainment, it has been seriously detrimental in opening access to the Classics. As a direct result of state funding stagnation, schools like my own often have only one Latin teacher or a few non-specialists taking it in turns to offer lessons. This naturally divides students into two camps often based upon their primary school English results. Not only is this a weak determining factor for determining proficiency in an ancient language, it also arbitrarily decides who is perceived as "clever" and who is not. In a bid to combat this, I run after school and lunchtime clubs for students who are interested. Last year we focused on Ancient Greek, learning the basics of the language and mythology, then we designed and made pottery depicting characters from these myths. Although only a small step, it's important to show students that the school setting does not have to determine who they are and what they can achieve.

This setting also ignores the benefits of Latin for students whose first language is not English (English as an Additional Language) or who are dyslexic. EAL students may not feel comfortable in modern foreign language classes, as there is a performative aspect to speaking and listening, neither of which are usually taught in ancient languages. Similarly, dyslexic students often find Latin simpler to break down with little instruction, which can build confidence in other written subjects. Unfortunately, these students are often not

given the chance to explore classical subjects, as many head teachers see Latin as a way to entice middle-income parents to the school with the hope of increased grades and do not open the subject up to all.

One of the benefits of knowledge of ancient history is the ability to look back and analyze the past without directly critiquing anyone's moral, political or philosophical viewpoint. This provides us with a safe space to examine complex topics such as race, identity, gender and religious beliefs at a relatively young age. This is very important in state institutions, which often fail to address or facilitate the exploration of such vital ideas. It also allows us to challenge the presupposed orthodoxy of mainstream classical thought: that the Romans and Greeks were great peoples, and that this is the reason why the subject has persisted. Whilst that's obviously bollocks—Athenian women were widely oppressed, both societies were highly colonialist, slavery was accepted by the majority of Greeks and Romans etc.—it is the pervading thought. Challenging this allows us, as teachers, to encourage young students to critique ancient structures and ideas and their modern counterparts. In monthly sessions with my Key Stage Thre (Years seven and eight, ages eleven through thirteen) students, we deal with a different topic from slavery to race to elections to religious beliefs.

My most recent discussion stemmed from an eleven-year-old asking if the Romans were racist. From this, we went into examining the difference between racist language and structural / institutional racism, and how people may not perceive their actions, words, or even lives to be racist but they can still be. The students contrasted the concept of the Roman use of the word "citizen," *civis*, (by the 1st Century AD this meant being a free, adult male Italian), and the divisive use of the term to justify aggressive military expeditions, as well as today's concept of nationality, tied to modern rhetoric about immigration, asylum seekers and race.

As a result of the Romans' aggressive imperial expansion, there are many tales of oppressed groups resisting. To allow our students to learn about this resistance, we studied the de facto leader of the Iceni (a tribe in East Anglia), Boudicca, who led a rebellion against the Roman occupying forces in Britannia in 60 / 61AD. We took a group of thirty Year Nine students (fourteen and fifteen years old) to the Museum of London to learn more about this resistance, writing speeches from her perspective before the Battle of Watling Street, where the rebellion was at its peak, but subsequently defeated. With the majority of the class coming from Afro-Caribbean heritage, this exercise allowed students to explore and articulate their own frustrations with colonialism, racism, and oppression, and encouraged solidarity with other oppressed groups through empathizing with Boudicca and the Iceni. The speeches were incredibly moving, and the students spoke with a passion that they are rarely able to express in our usual lessons about grammar.

Many of the students had previously only had a few reference points for slavery, oppression and colonialism, those taught to them in schools: the transatlantic slave trade, apartheid South Africa and Nazi Germany. My Sixth Form students baulked when I informed them that Hannibal the Great, one of the greatest military commanders of the era, was not white. Despite knowing he was from Carthage (near modern Tunis), they had assumed he was white like every other historical military leader they have studied. Too often, no mention is made of the revolutionary secessions of the plebs, the importance of multiculturalism in the success of the Roman Empire, the critique of authoritarian power in Virgil's *Aeneid*. Not that Roman culture should be held up as a model for others to follow. It is rife with examples of colonialism, racism, sexism, totalitarianism and many other damaging hierarchies.

The Greeks and Romans were excellent orators and spent hours pouring over speeches. Modern speechwriters mine the likes of Cicero and Lysias for techniques with which to embellish their ideas. Most recently we have seen Donald Trump, whose campaign used all the classics techniques of ancient and modern demagogues: the art of repetition, colloquialism and verisimilitude. As a result, he has provided excellent subject material to analyze when teaching A Level students about the power of Ciceronian rhetoric. Analysing the rhetorical techniques used by ancient orators gives students the ability to demystify and critique modern politicians and social leaders, and empowers them to navigate the boundary between what they are saying and that they mean.

There are many ways in which Latin, a subject perceived to be elite, can challenge modern orthodoxies. As teachers it's important to redefine mainstream attitudes towards the study of the language and culture of the Greco-Roman world, and in doing so allow it to be used as a tool for students to critique and deconstruct the social hierarchies around them.

The Teaching Resistance column is designed to provide a platform for radical, subversive teachers/educators to share their ideas and draw attention to important issues around education; particularly compulsory- and community-based education. If you are a teacher (anywhere in the world) for students of primary or secondary school ages (K-12), community colleges, or alternative learning arrangements such as collectivist free schools, and you want to submit an idea for a column, please write an email to teachingresistance@gmail.com. There is also an archive for this column which can be found online at teachingresistancearchive.blogspot.com.

"I was frightened but I tried to pretend
That my happiness would never end.
So I started staying up late at night.
We roamed the streets, maybe looked for a fight.
I wore Doc Martens and dug T-Rex.
Girls were funny, so was sex!
I was a pre-pubescent...But not for long!"
—JILTED JOHN, "I was a Pre-Pubescent"

"Wake up in the morning, have me Ready Brek
Have me cup of Bovril and wring me muvvers neck.
Stroll into town, beat a Soul Boy black and blue.
Put fruit gum in the meter cos there's fuckall else to do!"
—THE LAST RESORT, "Violence in our Minds"

Little Terrors

I woke up in beast moooode! Off your stool you bums! Does Oi! belong in *Maximum Rocknroll*?! Fuckin' better believe it! This is a magazine about punk, yeah? I can make a case that Oi! bands play a form of maximum-rock'n'roll. Can you say the same about some of the soft serve indie rock that gets the reviewers sliding off their seats? (Eww!) Ever heard GRASS WIDOW? (If not, go ask yer local "cool" librarian, they love them.) Tell me how they're maximum-anything! I mean they're no Y PANTS! Now there's a band that really blows the doors off! Sheesh!

Is discourse a thing to shy away from? We say No! Want to live in an echo chamber? Go ahead. You'll end up like one of those fuckin' bleached out and blind cavefish. Belly up if they're exposed to the sun. I aint no soft fish! I'm a human! With a brain that can

interpret dissimilar viewpoints (like *Soulforce Revolution* is a "good" record) and come to an understanding (it's not, but it gets a pass cuz it was '89) without feeling like I have to win the argument (if you want to smoke weed and listen to "Tribute Freedom Landscape", that's your journey bro').

So, *Maximum Rocknroll* stands against nationalism and patriotism (whattabout the Olympics!)? Good on them. Knowing that, *orange* you glad I'm the one writing about Oi!? If I stopped reviewing bands that had any amount of nationalism or patriotism in their lyrics you'd be left with a weak sauce that I would dare call an "Oi! column." It'd be tantamount to perjury (gasp!). I'm sure there's some jabroni out there who only listens to left-wing "progressive" anarkOi! (btdubs, that new OI POLLOI is just aight). And I'm sure they're as capable of ripping off Bruce Roehrs as I am. But a bozo like that could only offer something akin to Solomon's Judgement (look it up ya heathens) or Trump's Health Care Act; a thing that leaves everyone bummed.

Oi! is a many splendored thing and runs the spectrum from Ultra-nationalist to "buy-American" to "Countries, we don't need no stinkin' countries." And I listen to everything I can get my hands on. And then I review some of it *for those that are interested*. Those last words are my main focus when I sit down to write this column. "Still the New Breed" is written to represent Oi! in MRR, skin-tags (Oi!) and all. You egghead Einsteins can freeze 'em off if you want! (Eww!)

If the enemies of Oi! want to indulge in biographical fallacy and "lifestyle" critiques—but only when it suits their preconceptions—we say go ahead. There's a reason "Hated and Proud" is our rallying cry, not theirs. Oi! has always been seen as the soundtrack for the backyard buffoon by patrician punks. I've got a singleness of purpose regarding this column, whether that purpose fits in these pages is beyond my purview.

Anyway, time for Oi! I'm sure I lost a few of the wet-brain contingent already. Lemme reel 'em back in: Hey you skinheads! Get ready for some ultimate Levi's jeans and Alpha M1 rock'n'roll! Let's make grandpa proud!

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ARCH RIVALS – "Arch Rivals / Outlaws" (Randale): Who doesn't love it when a band has a theme song?! The song "Arch Rivals" by ARCH RIVALS might be one of the best things these dudes have done! And that's saying something. This is upbeat rough and ready boot-punk suitable for some trouble on the terraces, or as they're now called "Safe-Standing Zones!" (Thanks nanny-state!) *"We're always ready to have a fight! / We're no pacifists! / If we don't like the question we'll answer with our fists! / Don't back us in a corner / 'Cos we'll come out swinging / You'll never hear us when we're down / Only when we're winning! / Arch Rivals! Working class is in my soul! / Arch Rivals! Streetpunk, Skinhead, Rock'n'Roll!"* The band labels themselves "streetpunk" and they certainly check all the boxes: you got yer Whoa-Oh-Oh, you got your slow down floor-tom part and then you got some all-stop handclap soccer-chant business that even I—as a person who regularly sprains their eyes from all the rolling typical streetpunk encourages—can enjoy.

The flip, "Outlaws" is slower but no less infectious with a chorus that was running thru my brain all day, *"When freedom is outlawed, only Outlaws will be free / God forgives, Outlaws don't / You'll get no apology!"* Play it for your 1%er friends, they'll love it!

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MOB MENTALITY – *No Honor, No Guts, No Glory* demo: If sixteen-year-old knuckleheads made this I would think it was some of the best shit I'd heard all year. But it ain't that. It's grown men that are behind this. Most "notably" is Dan Hooligan of the Philly brawlers HOOLIGAN 77. That band was at least good for some beatdown style goofiness. But MOB MENTALITY seems like a band that a computer cooked up by eating YouTube clips of AGNOSTIC FRONT, SLAPSHOT and Steven Seagal movies. AlphaGo as a Skinhead! (Not the same as OI! THE ROBOT, which was good.) *"We're the punks, we're the skins / we're the hardcore hooligans! / We never had a chance is what they say / But we'll keep fighting until our dying day / We never changed no matter what they said / Whooooa! / We do what we want in our own way / Whooooa! / We might be ugly but we sure are proud / Whooooa! / We get violent and fucking loud / Whooooa!"* Yuck, y'all. If you drive a truck that has those gross pendulous nutz dangling off the trailer hitch this might be the band for you.

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OXLEY'S MIDNIGHT RUNNERS – *The Battle Vol. 1* LP (Oi! The Boat / Randale): *The Battle Vol. 1* collects OXLEY'S MIDNIGHT RUNNERS's four previously released EPs and their track, "American Made" from *Oi! Aint Dead Vol. 5* on one LP. For those not in the know, the band is comprised of members who have connections to the FATSKINS, WARLORDS, 90 PROOF, RANCID, and OLD FIRM CASUALS, and they play standard new styled rock'n'oi! Feh. (Insert shrugging emoticon.)
Lez get real, this shit is like the male orgasm (eww): Lotta build up for a lackluster result that mostly just makes me sleepy. The strongest tunes are the three quasi-historical tracks, "Abbas the Great," "Spear of Destiny," and "We are Legion." They're left-field enough to be interesting and bring to mind LIVE BY THE SWORD (that's a compliment) with their allegorical battle-Oi! The "political" songs sound like they were written by Joe Biden or some other pro-America Democrat (or a high school sophomore...Someone call Burn-y Sanders, heyo!) *"Dead raccoon on your head / Even El Chapo says he wants you dead / You been stepping on the poor for years / To Michael Forbes we say, Cheers! / You're a fool, you're a liar / Donald Trump, you've been fired!"* Not really "Sheep Farming in the Falklands" or "We Rule, Ok!" is it?
We appreciate whoever sequenced the record mixing up the tacks from their respective EPs resulting in an LP with the pacing of a standalone album instead of the discography that it is. That's something, yeah?

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R.A.S. – *Pas Le Temps De Regretter* 12" (Contra / Dirty Punk): You can't spell Franse wrong without R-A-S! This little five track 12" is another feather in France's already heavily-plumed beret. RAS released one EP, *Rien À Signaler* in 1983 and an LP—conveniently titled *84*—a year later. Then the band broke up for 30 years and reformed in 2012. This is their first release of the 21st century. We say welcome! The five songs found on *Pas Le Temps De Regretter* were written—but never recorded—back in the day before the band split. It's like a time capsule was opened and stuffed inside was a EP's worth of classic killer top-tier French Oi! Plain and simple, it's great. Anyone who sharted their shorts over the CAMERA SILENS reissues a few years ago or gave Oi! a pass based on the arrival of SYNDROME 81 and RIXE should give this a listen. Loyal Supporters of Oi! will no doubt know the name R.A.S. and understand the power this release holds.

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RIXE – *Baptême Du Feu* EP (La Vida Es Un Mus): It's RIXE! Urvrybody luvs 'em! And for good cause. This is Raw Oi! stripped down to only the most necessary of bones; namely the spine bone, fist bone, and boot bones. RIXE is French as fuck, but as I've said before their sound reminds me more of the first wave of Italian Oi! bands like NABAT, ROUGH, HOPE AND GLORY with their no bullshit melding of hardcore punk urgency, UK82 bounce, and plodding Oi! riffage that paints a bleak picture directly on a back alley brickwall. Per the last two EPs this thing has art by Nicky Rat and contains two songs a side. All are solid and stay firmly in the lines RIXE has established for themselves. Consistency is their strong trait. Bands can grow or change direction (full-post-punk?!) but the hardest task seems to be producing dependable and steady bangers one release after another. These guys know what they want and they know

how to get it. And ya know, all passerbys are, like, destroyed. Total win!

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Adios a-holes! More of the same next week. Let's go Bucs!

ENDNOTES:

1) The only thing we're bad at is giving up: AmericanBootGang@Gmail.com

2) Recently head honcho Grace Ambrose passed on an email that Robert from Refuse Records sent her regarding Olifant Records—who released an LP by BAKERS DOZEN that I included in my year end top-ten—being a "greyzone label" that "should not have any promotion from publications like *MRR*." "Greyzone" is a vague and subjective term. It's nuanced much in the same way as "politically correct" is and changes connotation based on who's using it. Me, I'm not offended by the label and I would say it fits Olifant's roster. That said, Olifant Records is an independent business and I can't fathom what their intent is or how they view their place in the world; I lack any of the telepathy the Left exhibits concerning these matters. There are records I would buy from them and other I would not; whether the reviews of those records are accepted for print is above my pay grade. As for BAKERS DOZEN, nothing in their music—their record label has no impact on the content of the album—makes me think they are unfit for publication in MRR. An artist's extracurriculars—including label affiliations—do not inform my opinion of their *art*; they inform my opinion of the *artist*. Using Robert's own logic concerning Olifant Records and BAKERS DOZEN: Because I consider myself patriotic and a nationalist, *Maximum Rocknroll* is itself a patriotic and nationalist publication based on their publishing of my column and conversely I'm an anarchist because I'm published in *MRR*, both of which are factually false. You get me? It's an untenable position based in bias and assumption and as such I try to avoid it when I write my column. Hope that clears things up.

Censorship! It seems that word is on everybody's lips these days. Whether it be the silencing of Milo Yiannopoulos at UC Berkeley or more recently the fiasco with Dana Schutz's painting of Emmett Till, journalists and critics alike are accusing protesters everywhere of actively stifling free speech.

Metal has also seen its fair share of controversial events. Back in November, antifa protesters in Montreal managed to shut down the final night of the metal festival Messe des Morts in an act of opposition to the headlining band Graveland. Their reasoning was solid. Graveland is a Polish white nationalist band, whose members have also played in many National Socialist Black Metal (NSBM) bands. And after the Yiannopoulos protest at Berkeley, the Oakland Metro Operahouse canceled a Marduk concert over fears of an Antifa protest. Marduk, as far as I can tell (please correct me if I am wrong) are not out and out Nazis, but they certainly do love the imagery and history of Nazi Germany in World War II. One of their albums is named after a German tank division, and their most recent is named after the nickname given to a Nazi officer. These facts, along with some of their album art and t-shirt designs, were the reasons why Antifa hoped to protest the Marduk show in Oakland.

Unsurprisingly, metal fans have reacted with repulsion at both of these show cancellations. Many of the same arguments that have been discussed with the Yiannopoulos protest have also been the main talking points of the debate surrounding these shows. Antifa, according to many metal fans (and I do mean many—check the comment section for any article about Antifa that is posted to a metal website) are just as violent as the fascists they are fighting and are doing their best to suppress free speech as often as possible. Metalheads repeatedly insist that people have the right to express themselves even if their words and ideas are reprehensible.

Although this seems like a common centrist talking point, the idea that metal has a right to free speech is rooted in metal's interests in misanthropy and horror. Ever since Black Sabbath first sang about Satan on their self-titled album, metal has never shied away from topics that directly confront social norms and institutions. Extreme metal (both death and black metal in particular) embrace that with particular zeal. Sure there are extreme metal bands that discuss philosophy or nature or any number of relatively tame topics, but for every one of those bands there are probably at least a dozen or more that have lyrics about Satan, Lovecraft, war, violence, and death. These lyrics often (but not always) have little to no grounding in reality—much of its imagery is solely meant to shock and upset, and is usually not a call to action. This hasn't stopped metal from being attacked in the past for its lyrical content (what's up, Tipper Gore!!), but these criticisms often miss the point. Many extreme metal bands go for these controversial topics because they aesthetically fit with the bands' material.

However, metal's constant interest in boundary pushing is not a strong enough reason to absolve it of social responsibility. I am not arguing that metal is obligated to make any sort of overt political statement. But when metal (and any other sort of music) advocates or describes a total disregard of basic human rights, then it is no longer pushing boundaries. It is instead replicating many of the awful parts of humanity that it often seeks to confront and criticize. And when these ideas and ideologies are so openly advocated, it directly affects people in the real world. Bands that, as examples, glorify rape or condone killing people of color minimize the real trauma undergone by the groups directly affected by it.

Because of this, I do not see the actions of Antifa (and on a larger scale, many other leftist political movements/marches) as inherently censorship or acts of violence, but rather an act of drawing and maintaining boundaries. When bands like the aforementioned Graveland openly discuss their right wing, white nationalist beliefs, whether it be through song or through interviews, they help legitimize these beliefs in the minds of some people. It normalizes violence against people of color and many other communities. The presence of Nazi groups like Graveland is an inherent act of restricting unprivileged groups, and by protesting, Antifa is defending many of the basic rights of unprivileged people. These protests effectively tell bands like Graveland, their supporters, and people who may be interested in extreme right-wing philosophies that their ideologies are not accepted.

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There were a *ton* of great new releases this month! And the gnarly thing about this month's reviews is that *all* of these are debut full-lengths from different bands. Damn! If this were *Maximum Heavymetal* instead of *Maximum Rocknroll* I would put some more metal reviews in here, but it ain't, so y'all will just have to make do with these:

VENENUM – *Trance of Death* LP (Sepulchral Voice): Hailing from Germany, VENENUM do death metal right! *Trance of Death* is *full* of riffs that most metal fans should love. And yet, there is a strong progressive edge to these songs that somehow doesn't weaken the songwriting. In fact, one of the strongest elements of this album is just how exploratory it is. Each of the songs have moments where they explore more out there, kind of psychedelic textures. But they surprisingly do so without approaching boring stoner tropes. In fact, even though the songs are long (the shortest one besides the intro

is five minutes), every single idea the band explores is memorable and fairly strong. If you love TRIBULATION, HOWLS OF EBB, or MORBUS CHRON then you will probably love this album, but honestly this feels as though it is in a league of its own.

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PILLORIAN – *Obsidian Arc* LP (Eisenwald Tonschmiede): Anyone even vaguely interested in underground metal in the last twenty years has heard the name AGALLOCH. Their unique combination of folk, doom, and post-metal netted them a fairly large fanbase during their run as a band. When they broke up last year, many people were deeply upset. I never gave a shit about them, which is why I am shocked that I like former AGALLOCH front man John Haughm's new project, PILLORIAN. Gone are the meandering post-metal riffs; in their place are excellent melodic black metal parts that are tense and surprisingly accessible. However, *Obsidian Arc* is a relatively plodding affair that is furious but with few moments of genuine aggression. There are plenty of times where the album could use a bit more of a punch and a bit more speed. But as it is, this is solid for when you're in the mood to brood.

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COWARDICE – *Without Condolence* LP (self-released): This is among my favorite discoveries this month. When was the last time you looked at an album and immediately realized that you needed to listen to it? For me, it was the moment I saw the worn lithograph adorning COWARDICE's debut album. I fell in love with these etchings when I started getting into THOU and the BODY, and I don't feel like it's a coincidence that one is used for *Without Condolence*. The first band that comes to mind when listen to COWARD is also THOU. Both bands play an extremely detuned version of sludge that is also fairly melodic. This is the rare example of a solid copycat band, and I really can't wait to see where this band goes from here.

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ASCENDED DEAD – *Abhorrent Manifestation* LP (Dark Descent)
This is some *brutal* old school death metal! *Abhorrent Manifestation* is raw, loud, and fucking *fast*! The sheer amount of tough ass riffs and dissonant solos is truly overwhelming. If only they chose a name that was closer to the way they sound. Here are some words that ASCENDED DEAD could have chosen instead of "Ascended" to better reflect just how filthy they sound: Fetid, Acrid, Unholy, Rotting, Putrid, Shit, Horrendous, Barbaric, Molding, Festering. This doesn't reinvent the wheel by any means, but it sure is a fun listen. If you're new to death metal, stay away from this one. RIYL: IMMOLATION, INCANTATION, or if you wished MORBID ANGEL's *Altars of Madness* were even more ugly and raw.

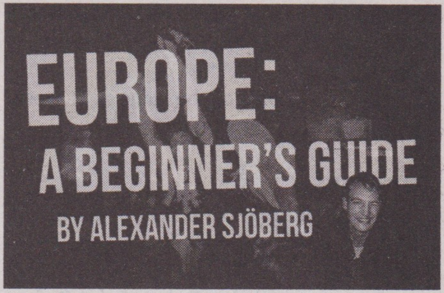
***

LUNAR SHADOW – *Far From Light* LP (Cruz del Sur): Hey hesher! Stop your air guitaring for a moment and check out this album from LUNAR SHADOW. This may be the best traditional metal album you will hear all year long. It's got all the key components for a retro album: harmonized guitar lines, clean vocals and strong hooks. But it's not all IRON MAIDEN ripoff riffs. Unlike a lot of active retro bands, they also blend influences from early progressive metal bands through their epic songs (think FATES WARNING). These songs are more complex than many of the earliest metal bands, but if you were wild about SUMMERLANDS or ETERNAL CHAMPION, this will probably be up your alley. The only thing that might be off-putting to some people are the vocals, which are for the most part not very powerful.

***

REBIRTH OF NEFAST – *Tabernaculum* LP (Norma Evangelium Diaboli / Oration): Is there something in the water in Iceland? REBIRTH OF NEFAST continues the incredible trend of Icelandic musicians pumping out great black metal. This is the solo project of Wann, who is originally from Ireland but now records and performs in Iceland. He has played in two bands at the forefront of that scene—WORMLUST and SINMARA—but his solo project may be stronger than both of those groups. Wann owns and operates his own recording studio and has gone to great lengths to add a huge amount of sonic depth to his recordings. This is no bedroom black metal album—this is a massive yet crisp document of sonic terror. Much like the other bands in the Icelandic black metal scene, REBIRTH OF NEFAST is largely indebted to the claustrophobic dissonance of DEATHSPELL OMEGA, but there are also moments of beauty to be found in this album, whether it be the more melodic leads, the echoes of synthesizers, or the occasional distant hints of acoustic instruments.

Send your metal demos / albums / questions / hate mail / whatever to Bradley at deathpoemrecs@gmail.com.



"Why is it somehow acceptable to have patriotic bands playing in anarchist places or being interviewed in zines, who seemed to be politically not inclined to patriotism? Why? Why? Why?"

Such read a letter in the 407th issue of *Maximum Rocknroll* which grabbed my attention. It's a recurring debate and, while the letter focused on American bands and punks being interested in nationalist European Oi!, it has always been front-and-center here in Denmark where I live.

But rather than pointing out mistakes, such as the letter did, I would like to share a story on how the punk scene I grew up with here in Denmark dealt with the issue of nationalist / right wing-influenced bands and punks approaching the scene. See, here in the cold North there has never been a discussion on where the punk scene had its political standpoint. The scene has always been dominated by a left-leaning culture radical majority, which had close ties to the squatters' movement of the '80s.

Of course the scene gradually changed and diminished, as did the squatters' movement. In the '90s, punk did exist, but as MTV and the mainstream started to inspire more and more kids to get into soft punk, the scene became less tied to the political aspect. This was when I grew up.

In my hometown Odense—which was very typical of rural Denmark—there was indeed a punk scene. Back then it was more about drinking beer and having a good time, less about changing the world and being political. It was a good time, but for me it quickly got boring. I wanted more, and I got politically involved at a very young age. A good thing, because back then all the stupid teenage shit I did was very destructive, and with politics, I ended up using my energy on something constructive. At least most of the time.

But things in the city changed. Or maybe I just started noticing what people around me said and did. The punks who arrived to the scene through the mainstream obviously had no political reasoning because, well, why would they? After all, the reason they were at the shows was because of Blink 182 and Sum

41. But it wasn't always that pretty.

Some eventually developed a taste for more provocative music and discovered local racist bands like Hvid Røvfuld (directly translated: White Asskicking) and of course, as is the custom, the later Skrewdriver albums. I'm still baffled how much attention this one single band has gotten through the years.

The problem grew. A guy who was actually my close friend bought the classic Sid Vicious-swastika shirt and wore it with pride. Some people started doing Sieg Heil salutes for fun. That specific "joke" almost ended in a big fight one time, when this goth punk kid called Damien (yes, that was his actual name) saluted a bunch of Muslim kids with his right hand raised WWII-style and then claimed we were his friends. We weren't. What an asshole. In the end, some started hanging out with actual Nazi-skins, because, hey, they liked the same bands and tied their laces the same way.

At first, this wasn't a big issue. It was just an embarrassment, and it felt bad when people from bigger cities made fun of us and generalized. But that was not the biggest problem. Far from it. The trend proved to be outright dangerous, when people in a close by city were attacked by right-wing skins. A rumor was later confirmed that fencewalker-punks had tipped off the right-wing skins to let them know who would be where in the city, so they could plan the beating.

To me and my fellow political punks, we felt that this couldn't be allowed to continue. We had enough and wanted to uproot the trend. So how did we go about this daunting task?

Some people made an argument that we should fight back the hard way. Luckily we didn't try that out. Other cities in Denmark ended up in endless circles of extremely violent street fights because of this approach, and leftist punks fled the cities as a result. In some places, nothing was done, and the scene in those cities developed into boring provocative-just-to-provoke. Bland, dull GG-clones not worth your time.

In my town, we ended up choosing a different path. We started confronting people, and asked them why they did what they did. Were they aware how dangerous their flirt with the radical right was? And in the end, we asked them to take a stand. Most of them did, and though I lost a few friends, most people decided to simply put away the attitude. The ones that didn't decide were put out in the cold, and while it was harsh, it proved very effective. They came back eventually—without their "fun" Nazi salutes and swastika shirts.

But one very important thing was that even though we chose to be hardliners on *actual* right-wing propaganda, music and Nazi-salutes, we never went as far as starting a war against Oi!, skins, the first Skrewdriver-album, (sober) national pride, and all of that, which smells a bit of nationalism but actually isn't. And here—to me—lies the key.

Because if the punk scene is supposed to be one hundred percent free of all mistakes, we end up so busy being the punk police that it ruins the fun of it all, and then we lose momentum. If that happens, people who are in it for the punk and art are scared away, the scene becomes fractured and very vulnerable.

My point is this: Who cares about that stupid first Skrewdriver album? In my world, you can listen to it all you want, and if you absolutely feel like showing off some national pride on a football-stadium I seriously don't care. But I *do* care if people start being involved in organized radical right-activities, fencewalk and double-cross their fellow punks. This is the problem we should focus on.

This is part one of two:

I got a private message on instagram from Hausfrau record store in Cleveland.

The shop is run by Steve Peffer, who also does a radio show called Budget Rock Showcase. You can listen to it post live-to-air via Soundcloud. The name might be more familiar, however, with his participation in bands like HOMOSTUPIDS and PLEASURE LEFTISTS, amongst some other Cleveland bands over the last twenty years; the most well known being his flailing frontman personality in 9 SHOCKS TERROR. Side note: check out his new band the COWBOY (not to be confused with the COWBOYS), which currently has an LP in the works on Fashionable Idiots—I'm pretty sure that's the deal anyway. The 9 SHOCKS TERROR show in New York got announced while I was down in Cleveland for the week in early March, and the kids there were flipping their wigs. By "kids" I mean people in their twenties and early thirties, because compared to the generation of infamous hardcore that rose in the late "80s and fell in the early 2000s there, they were the next generation of ruffians that are currently keep the scene alive (…however, there is an even newer generation of kids coming through the Cleveland scene in their late teens but I'm going off topic so will save that for some other time).

This is the first time 9 SHOCKS TERROR have played in roughly 10 years. People were chatting about this one-off show, buying tickets and making plans to travel to the Big Apple in groups. Some had seen 9 SHOCKS back in the day and were stoked to be able to see them again, some haven't but they're an old local favorite and wanted to experience what they'd missed. Some people had already seen them a bunch of times and thought everyone was making a big deal of it when there's a new scene in Cleveland that deserved the attention—either way, there were a bunch of opinions and excitement and whatever else flying around from this announcement. Soon after, word started to spread on the down low that there was going to be a Cleveland show too—a practice show for New York—but no one was supposed to know about it yet. Steve wanted to choose the bands and didn't want a bunch of locals asking him to support, or so it was said. I was keen to know more but knew it would come out in time. In the interim though, I couldn't make this trip to NY for the show so watched everyone else get excited as the line up began to build with BROWN SUGAR doing a one-off show and international favorite S.H.I.T. getting added to the bill, amongst some locals. I hear the special guest is IRON LUNG.

My week in Cleveland was a bit of a mess due to personal reasons, but I went to three shows and caught up with some friends so, all in all, it was a good time. I caught a lift to the underbelly of Lake Eerie with NY rock'n'rockers BARBED WIRE, who had played Toronto the night before. All the guys were friendly and funny, welcoming me into the group for the ride. After hitting a good poutine spot for breakfast ('cos Canada), we got on the road back to their homeland. It was cold out but the weather was clear so we shot the shit and listened to tunes between gas station breaks at Sheetz and food stops at Taco Bell. We got to Cleveland's west side at 7:00 p.m. on the dot, and I strode with purpose through the doors of the Yellow Ghetto and down into the basement—yup, after driving over six hours I'd made it just in time for VANILLA POPPERS band practice. BARBED WIRE went next door to Now That's Class to get some drinks and settle in after the long drive. Afterward, we all got comfy at the house watching TV until the time came for us to pile back into the van and various other automobiles to drive to the venue back over on the east side. They were playing an ex-Hell's Angels bar that hadn't been booked for shows before. It was on a dark street littered with abandoned and soulless houses, off a wide artery of a main road the east side of this ex-auto industry town contains. The only hint that we had arrived at the right location was a small neon "Pabst" sign lighting up the

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window. Inside seemed a sanctuary from the outside desolation, a brightly lit and homey family-run bar. It was a small and simple place where the drinks were cheap when they weren't giving them away for free while we munched away on the complimentary chips and salsa and nuts they'd put out. What a great place. It was pleasant to be in a different space outside of the usual Yellow Ghetto or NTC shows. In saying that though, more people have been booking shows and experimenting with different venues around the Cleveland area, which has been cool in changing it up, but no super solid venues have come out of it yet besides the occasional shows at Maple Lanes, Mahalls or The Happy Dog.

A decent amount of people came out for this Sunday night three-band bill. It opened with new feel-good rock'n'roll band the SIGHT, fronted by Ricky, the mind behind Quality Time Records. The scene around QTR fused with the Cleveland punk scene in the last year or two, and from what I've heard came out of a college art scene background. It's been a neat little merger, bringing in more people that book shows, put out records, play in bands, and just generally come out to shows. The SIGHT also contains members of bands newer to the punk scene like PIG FLAYER and SHAGG. BARBED WIRE were sandwiched in the middle, and the night finished with the oldest band of this new generation, BAD NOIDS. People were having a fun time, jumping and pushing each other around. The grandson of the bar owner was a beer-chugging meathead wearing a Corona t-shirt and was probably having a better time than any of us combined, and got so worked up on the show that he tipped a beer over his head when BAD NOIDS finished and yelled "That's my grandma!!!" pointing at the lady behind the bar. We all spent a good minute cheering just cos it was stupid and funny. Plus I was glad he was having a blast because he looked like he could twig out at any moment and clobber all of us. The show ended on that note. People hung out for a while but slowly the bar cleared out in dribs and drabs, and we made our way back to the west side.

In the morning I went off to visit my favorite local diner—The Shore for you all out there keeping tabs on what's good in the area—and then said my goodbyes to BARBED WIRE as they went off to check out the Rock'n'roll Hall Of Fame before their Pittsburgh show that night.

Tuesday night came around and S-21 were in town, playing the basement of the Ghetto. They were also super lovely people, getting in from Toronto just before the show. Lia and I prepared for a party earlier that day, going out for food and drink ingredients. When they arrived we stood around chit-chatting eating chili and drinking beers until slowly people started turning up to the house, the show kicking off just before 10:00 p.m. It was a four-band bill, with SHAGG opening, VANILLA POPPERS on next, and S-21 in a locals sandwich with RUBBERMATE ending the show. It was the POPPERS first show since Christmas and we jammed some new songs that we'd been working on and were planning to record at the end of the week. All the bands were a lot of fun but S-21 totally ripped, the basement was packed out and everyone swayed back and forth trying to keep their feet as people at the front pushed every which way. I definitely got my mosh on. It was a good night although my memory got a bit fuzzy after our set…I ended up just getting way too drunk (how many times have you heard me say that?) and falling asleep in the upstairs bathtub before getting taken off to bed, spending the next three days nursing a hangover and a bangover...and a shameover. Y'know, just throw them all in there. I holed myself up in the Ghetto home for the next few days, nursing myself back to health—I can't tell if I'm getting old or I'm just a generally unfit sack of shit. Apart from this though, the main reason for the isolation was to finish a bunch of VANILLA POPPERS songs we were due to record the coming Sunday, our only chance to get it done before I had to leave that fine city yet again.

Friday night came around and POPPERS were playing another show, this time at Now That's Class that night to launch the ROOBEYDOCKS 7" out now on My Mind's Eye Records. As well as a record label, My Minds Eye is the other record store worth checking out (other than Hausfrau) when you come through Cleveland, Charles not only being a top guy but one of Cleveland's biggest punk fanatics for decades. It was an all-locals line up and party. LACERATE opened the show and shredded. They are the only raw punk band in Cleveland, with killer songs of epic proportions as Cece's vocals boom and wail over the riffs and between the solos. I'm looking forward to whatever release they have in the works coming out. PEACE TALKS were in from Pittsburgh and were up second, VANILLA POPPERS on third and ROOBEYDOCKS ended the show. Like the two previous shows that week, everyone was having a good time and moshed hard to all the bands but people went the wildest for the ROOBEYDOCKS. John is a crazy front man, and also sings in BULSCH. It seemed like there was a younger crowd out tonight than the other shows which was cool to see more people coming out to see shows and not just the regulars (as much as I love the regulars).

The show ended, I got a bit drunk and somehow it was the middle of the night and I was watching rap videos in the living room with John Villegas (of Cruel Noise Records). I woke up and was disappointed I got too drunk and passed out and missed the rest of the party, plus I didn't get to say goodbye to the PEACE TALKS homies. It was Saturday and we had to record the next day and get it all done because I wouldn't be back in town for two months. I still had one or two song to write lyrics for and I knew it was going to take me all day, so of course I spent the time on the couch not really doing anything but watching TV and freaking out that I'd run out of time. ROOBEYDOCKS went to Pittsburgh that night to play a show, and everyone else was mostly out of the house doing their own thing. Shaun Filley came back at some point in the night, inviting me next door to the bar. Everyone was there celebrating the ten-year anniversary of NTC. I decide to give myself a break from not getting anything done and go hang out for a few hours, spending most of the time behind the merch table with friend and regular show attendee Sophie, as she sold off ten-year NTC memorabilia. There was a giant cake on the stage in the show room that Mr California popped out of to play a set riddled with technical difficulties. We all cheered and sang along anyway. There was some Irish dancing performed by another local punk show attendee and her friends. Apparently there was going to be an exotic dancer but she cancelled last minute because she couldn't find anyone to take care of her kid—totally fair. There were some other acts that bailed but Steve Peffer was DJing and the tunes were good. The bar had packed out over few hours I was there. I finished my second drink and then called it a night, my mind lingering on the songs that still weren't finished that were going to be recorded.

We recorded in the basement of the house. It took about ten hours but we got it done in the day, taking a break only to grab coffee and Taco Bell. We listened to the rough tracks at the end of it all and for the first time I didn't completely hate my vocals and despise the idea of it being put out in any sort of listenable format. Progress, right? I got the bus back to Toronto the next day, feeling good that we'd finally managed to record and play some shows again. It had distracted me from the 9 SHOCKS show announcements and so I went back to Canada not expecting to go back to Cleveland until Horrible Fest at the end of May two months away.

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THRILLHOUSE RECORDS

Thrillhouse Records was started by a small group of punks in 2007 with the grand idea of establishing a punk record store and show space in San Francisco. The idea was simple, have a small volunteer run record store in the front of the building. Build makeshift bedrooms in the back. Shows in the basement. And of course, chaos will ensue. Which it has, continuously since. But within all the chaos there has been a (now) decent record store, tons of unforgettable shows, and a cheap home for a huge number of punks.

At the beginning of the year Thrillhouse Records celebrated its 10 year anniversary. Which might not sound like a super long time for a shop to be open, but for all the folks involved in the space, especially from the very start, this seems like an immense accomplishment. Partially because it was started by a bunch of really young punks with absolutely no idea of what they were doing. Partially because it has managed to survive in San Francisco, at a time which hostile forces are pushing out all the arts and culture in favor of big money. And partially because the core concept of the space relied on the continued non-stop support from the local punk community. There is absolutely no way this space could have survived without all the hard work and dedication given by the all of the volunteers, all of the of bands that played the space, and everyone that called Thrillhouse home. To mark the anniversary, we tried to connect with the people involved in the space over the years and asked them to share some memories. This is what they had to say...

FRED: Mission Records might possibly be the most inspiring place I ever visited. It was a terrible record store, but it was my favorite place on the planet. It was run by a bunch of punks, filled with weird shit, and they had shows every weekend. It was my ideal of a punk clubhouse.

ELI KORAL: When Mission Records closed its doors I felt like there was this awful void in the heart of the Mission punk community, at least in what was left of it.

EARLY DAYS...THRILLHOUSE, CIRCA 2007

Compiled and edited by Fred Schrunk and John Downing
Photos by Martin Sorrondeguy and Joscelyn Meador

FRED: For two or three years after Mission Records closed we'd always talk about how we wished someone would open up a new space just like it, never once considering the idea that maybe we would be the ones to start a new place in San Francisco. In 2005 I met Jesska at a show and we became fast friends. She told me once "Dude, *we* should open up a record store show space." And immediately I was in a deadly daydream spiral. I thought about it constantly and even dropped out of grad school because the idea was so all consuming. I had never worked at a record store before, or a show space, but I was young and figured "how hard could it be?"

I'd go on these long bike rides to nowhere just to look for "FOR RENT" signs on buildings. One time Sarah T. told me she knew about this great Indian pizza place and we should bike out that way. Across the street I noticed a sign in the window of an old Vacuum Repair shop. I called it up and left a message.

ZOË LEONARD: The landlord said we could use a wrench to pop off the lock...we didn't even have to use a tool, the lock was already busted. The space was dusty and moldy, the stairs had been torn out, and it was clear that people had been hanging out but not living there. Some fancy couple came in and saw Sarah standing there with a wrench and got nervous. They were looking at retail spaces to open a furniture store. They left. We thought it was perfect.

Fred: I thought maybe it was possible to build a second story with bedrooms and live in an upstairs area that we built. In my imagination it was something like the renegades' hangout in *Cecil B. DeMented*.

Anders Finn: I was invited over to help figure out how to help them make a store and space that wouldn't fall down. Man, was it a dirty hellhole.

Zach Rapatz: The building had high ceilings, a few oddly placed walls, a large if somewhat short basement and an out of place, hobbit sized walkway that wound its way to a second story room. It didn't seem like much at first glance.

Fred: Maybe they were bored, or maybe they were fascinated by how crazy the idea was, but Anders and Zach agreed to draw up some makeshift blueprints and then help build the whole thing if we got the place. I called the landlord back and said we were interested. And without asking any questions, he said "Okay, meet me there tomorrow with a money order for first month's rent and deposit." He lived in Southern California and was in the Bay Area just for the day. I figured when I showed up he'd have some follow-up questions for me, wanting a credit report, business plan, proof of employment, or just proof that I wasn't some dumb 24-year-old kid jerking him around. But no. When I arrived, he pulled out a lease and was ready to go. I asked him if he was okay with me doing some building and construction on the place. He said "I don't care what you do, just don't expect me to pay for anything." That's the only time I've ever seen him.

Jesska Hughes: It happened so fast, like, we had *just* talked about starting a record store / show space a week or two before and there was *already a potential site*. There was even a basement where we could have the shows separate from the upstairs spaces (more room for records, living, etc.). I thought I was just gonna throw a piece of plywood on a ledge to sleep on, maaaaybe secure it somehow. Blankets for walls or something, I don't know.

I was more of a "make it work" kind of a person at the time, and in a world where people were always making plans and then immediately running out of steam, I wanted to get on with the store part of things and have all the cool shows while we were fully focused. It was really hard to imagine the time, effort, and ingenuity it would take to create the kind of inner sanctum that was eventually built. Trailblazers of early Thrillhouse Records were visionaries in ways in which I was incapable. Once we were approved to rent, we were touring through the space with people saying stuff like "this is where the staircase will go, the upstairs bedrooms, etc." And I was unable to buy it! A friend and I jokingly called it "the unicorn" until we got shown to our nay-saying faces.

We disposed of two tons of gross ass carpet and old rotting flooring, we shoveled literal shit out of the basement before the plumbing was fixed. Brett puked on the shit. We used the bathroom at the Nervous Dog coffee shop next door for a while to sort it out. There was a weird guy who would clean the neighborhood for pleasure every night around 3:00 a.m. who would call us "filthy animals" but, as you well know, you've gotta get up to get down.

Before Thrillhouse had bedrooms, a kitchen, a store, other roommates, or a name, just two of us moved in and ate pretty much only Hot Pockets for two months. We had sleeping bags and a microwave and not much else. We used a Metallica *Kill Em All* record sleeve as a cutting board. There was a security guard at the Safeway who would eventually take pity on us, let us steal fancy olives and things during his overnight shift, and then take us to get stoned by the dumpsters.

ANDERS ON CONSTRUCTION..."HOW STURDY DO YOU WANT THIS? HOW LONG DO YOU WANT IT TO LAST FOR?" I SAID, "I DON'T KNOW, FIVE YEARS?" I COULDN'T POSSIBLY IMAGINE IT LASTING LONGER THAN THAT...

Fred: At one point Anders asked me "How sturdy do you want this? How long do you want it to last for?" I said, "I don't know, five years?" I couldn't possibly imagine it lasting longer than that.

Julia Booz: Sweet Tooth excitedly relayed to me that our friends were building out a storefront to become a record store and show space with rooms for people to live in so the rent would be guaranteed. He told me to get over there as soon as possible. It seemed too unbelievable, too impressive, even then, given the challenges and impediments to creating (much less sustaining) such a project.

That it's still around is an actual miracle to me in this age, with rents likened to New York, with ever encroaching fire marshals, rooms that should be advertised in square centimeters instead of square feet, financial complications, residents suffering through my band practicing there (for free), and desperation gasping throughout our changing landscape as people of all classes fight over the teeny scraps of space that remain.

TOSH: The store itself was small and scrappy; the walls had yet to gain that full punk patina of posters, tape, and grime. The exposed two by four wood was blonde, outgassing its unvarnished newness. The record selection itself was sparse, but present. There was even a large metallic T-Rex on the facade by the sign. Thrillhouse Records felt like a good place to be.

ELI KORAL: I always looked forward my shift because it was an opportunity to hang out with both Jesska and Evan, still two of my favorite people in the world. During this one shift, somehow Evan and I had gotten a hold of a big bottle of Jack Daniels. Maybe it was given to us, but we definitely didn't buy it—neither of us had money for much of anything beyond a bag of weed and a tall can or two. We put on a record (Wipers?) and proceeded to start taking shots of whiskey. Of course we had no shot glass, so we used a measuring cup we found in the kitchen. As we got more and more hammered, I remember spending most of the rest of the shift smoking cigarettes out front with Jesska, doing handstands on the back of the couch, and riding around the shop on Evan's shoulders. It was a fucking blast. I mean, we were *technically* working, but it wasn't likely that someone would come in to buy anything at that time anyway. I guess not a whole lot of people knew about the shop yet. Either way, when someone did buy something, it took both of us at full capacity to figure out how to calculate the total, add tax, mark all the sales down on the clipboard, and try not to forget to grab the tags out of the record sleeves.

FRED: The store was really pretty bad when we first started. We spent what little money we did have on sheetrock, framing lumber and other stuff to build the place, leaving almost nothing to buy records with. If crowdfunding existed back then, we certainly had never heard of it. Plus not a single one of us knew what it took to run a record store. We filled the racks with used records that were donated and back catalog stuff from local labels. I guarantee you we were the worst record store in the entire country (maybe the world) for the first two or three years we were open. Maybe more.

DAN GOETZ: I first heard about Thrillhouse in early 2007, when a friend was talking about helping to open a new, volunteer-run record store and show space in San Francisco. I was living in DC at the time and missing hanging out in the Bay, a feeling that only intensified when I read the great interview with some of the founding volunteers in *MRR* that soon followed. I remember being super impressed by both the store / living space setup as well as the logistical setup: those living in the back covered

"I GUARANTEE YOU WE WERE THE WORST RECORD STORE IN THE ENTIRE COUNTRY (MAYBE THE WORLD) FOR THE FIRST TWO OR THREE YEARS WE WERE OPEN. MAYBE MORE."

GIANT HAYSTACKS – BASEMENT SHOW

the rent and utilities, thus allowing the store to operate with no overhead. A year later, I moved to the Bay, and quickly got involved with volunteering. I still remember my first shift, eating a burrito, playing the Dangerloves *So This Is Love* 7", and feeling content with my decision to move out here.

TOBY: I would often ride the 49 bus line to get to my high school and I would see the storefront. Since I would ride to school every morning, I would never see this place open. One day I stayed home and I decided to go to Thrillhouse to see what was up. Walking in, I noticed the graffiti writings on the wall, posters everywhere and a bunch of records displayed. I browsed around for a little bit and noticed a cassette tape of Black Sabbath's first album. It wasn't the first time I've seen that album cover but I still found it haunting at the time, seeing a shadowy figure of Ozzy (or whoever that is) standing at the center of the image surrounded by cold, wet nature. I bought that cassette tape and listened to it at home.

CHRIS PRATT: I remember the first show. The floor was collapsing. Fred and crew propped it up from the basement with a single 4" x 4" and some other random shitty pieces of wood. Well, ye old mosh pit commenced and Fred was pleading with people not to hit the 4 x 4 because he was seriously worried that the whole goddam place would come crashing down and kill us all. No way in fuck was that place going to last more than eight months.

RYAN MURPHY: Was it the first show? Supposed to be the first show? Sex Vid—super hyped but not quite at the peak of their powers, was down from Seattle to play. Just as everyone showed up to party, the plumbing burst out through a drain in the basement and the show space was swimming in shit.

The show was, conveniently, relocated to a living room howling distance from my house. The set was impressive and the circumstances extreme, it was rad and most everyone had a great night. I think some of us saw it in each other, others were oblivious, but Fred was back at the newly christened Thrillhouse scooping poop off the floor of the basement and that kinda sucked.

RAY SUBURBIA: I actually smelled the place before I even saw it. I was on vacation visiting friends. Weird TV and Brilliant Colors were playing the store. They cleared out the kitchen / living room area and crammed everyone in there. The bands, the crowd, and the merch...which included dozens of pre-rolled joints that someone behind the merch table was selling for $1 each I walked into a giant cloud of stinky weed smoke and what felt like a cartoon of Bay Area punk. People were stoked and getting way too high to be in public in the store. The straightedge folks at the show were totally pissed cause there was so much weed smoke. The non-straightedge folks at the show were starting to get pissed cause there was so much weed smoke. The bands had to play in a cramped corner of a tiny room, some of them even up on the DIY stairs that led to the living space. I was a small town, middle of nowhere punk from rural Carbondale, Illinois and this seemed like utter fucking insanity. Yet it made perfect sense, and everything was under control.

MATTHEW WRENNE: The first time I stepped into Thrillhouse, I was with my friend and roommate, Tosh, to see David Copperfuck. Tosh and I had just moved out of our warehouse space because our landlord and fellow roommate had developed serious drug

addictions. At the time, it seemed like every show, bar, or urinal we went to led to a drug fest of one kind or another. Knowing very little about Thrillhouse, we were a bit wary about being invited to hang out after the show. I was bummed because I was so certain that this was when the drugs would appear. Instead, the guys started dealing out Magic: The Gathering cards and we watched *Crossroads* on VHS.

TOSH: Eventually, I was kinda there all the time. It seemed like there was a rad show every other night, and if not, there was still something happening—either a volunteer meeting or skill share, a taco night or pancake breakfast, a band practice, or just a bunch of people hanging out. We'd listen to records, fix up the spaces, and catch awesome bands. It was the possibility of the space that was alluring. There were so many shows that the local corner store even changed its name to "World of Beers," and it became common to see a line out the door of punks purchasing fuel for the evening. Frankly, those early years blend into one fantastically four-chorded trashed night, often ending with a burrito, a beer, and new friends. So very many cigarettes, in a time just before smartphones and apps.

JOHN DOWNING: Fuck, I recall 2007 was a really fun year for shows...that's also when I met Fred. Our first interaction was fucking classic (at least I think so) and in retrospect very Thrillhouse-esq. I was in the basement drinking beer...in between bands I bumped into him. With an empty can in hand I asked, "where's the trash bin?" He looked at me with a wry smile, took the can, crushed it, threw it against the wall and said, "that will do." We both cracked up...I guess things just escalated from there. Can't believe its been 10 years!

TANYA QUINLAN: I remember reading an email from Fred one time when a couple of shifts opened up at the store where he outlined the position of volunteer: "There's not much 'work' involved. And we don't care if you show up drunk!"

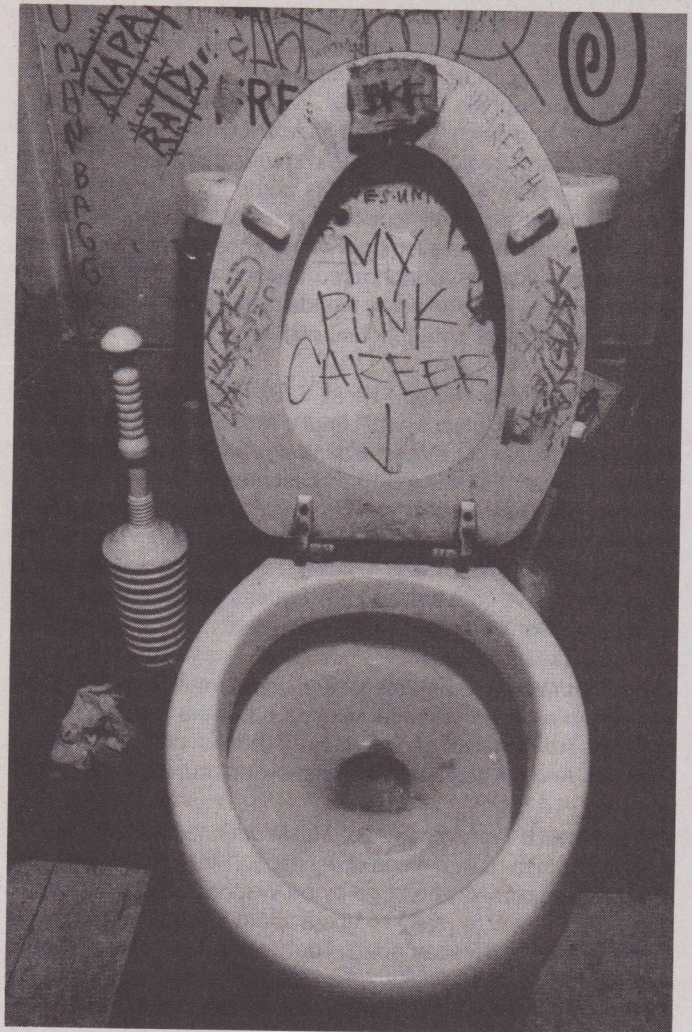
PETER AVERY: I ran into Fred at *Maximum* one day and decided I'd really let him have a piece of my mind. "Hey Fred, why is your store always closed when I go by on Wednesdays?" He said, "I don't know. If you're really so upset about it, why don't you start working the Wednesday shift? That way it'll be open." Then I thought to myself, oh I'll show him..."Yeah, I can totally work the 12-4 shift Wednesdays." That's just the way things went there.

Someone would come into the store and say, "Hey this place is cool. How do I get involved?" I'd tell them to come by the next day because the Thursday people hardly ever showed up.

BRYNN: The first time I stepped foot inside Thrillhouse was a Halloween show in 2007. As I walked through that claustrophobic hallway and down the crooked steps I saw a place, for the first time, that would be hard for me to ever leave. A place where I would spend countless nights watching friends play music, practicing with my band, recording, last-minute silkscreening the day we left for tour, and spending many sleepless nights with the people that I grew to love so much. Although, that night I mostly stayed in one corner.

ELI KORAL: Usually when the door opened, it was either a friend stopping by to say hi or someone who lived at the shop coming home from work. Most people who came by did so to hang out on the couch and shoot the shit. Every once in a while someone we didn't know would come through the door and buy a Shellshag record or a Hickey pin and we'd realize that there were other weirdos out there in the city, just like us, that we didn't know. It was awesome! Thrillhouse provided us with the means to expand our community outside of our group of friends. We were people who felt like we stuck out uncomfortably in most situations and as a result didn't quite know how to make "normal" friends in "normal" situations. Like punk rock in general, Thrillhouse was a beautiful magnet for the kids who felt like a square peg trying to squeeze into a round hole.

"THRILLHOUSE PROVIDED US WITH THE MEANS TO EXPAND OUR COMMUNITY OUTSIDE OF OUR GROUP OF FRIENDS"



DAN GUDGEL: One time I was buying beer on my way to a Thrillhouse show and two punks in the liquor store asked me if that's where I was going because they were nervous they wouldn't be able to find this "secret show space." I walked them down, but they weren't going to miss it. The sidewalk out front was buzzing with people who Fred was trying to get to go back inside so the cops didn't get wise to it.

CORY: I volunteered at Thrillhouse for about three years. I always opened the store at the ungodly hour of 11:30 so I subsequently had the duty of waking everyone up. Most times there was someone passed out on the couch. Or maybe a dog or two and once a cat. I even came in one morning to a bird in a cage on the desk. One time there was a guy asleep on the floor of the store. I tried to wake him a couple times but then I just assumed he was dead. He slept there for my whole shift and customers just stepped over him. When I was about to leave for the day he woke up and just walked out the door without saying a word. Another time, I went to play the arcade game and found a dude sleeping sitting up against the wall next to it. He woke up totally awkward, went to the bathroom and I never saw him again. I later found out that he lived at Thrillhouse. I guess he just never made it to his bedroom.

DAN GUDGEL: A couple of the times I've taken people to Thrillhouse for the first time they've said, "Yeah, this is what I thought a punk house would look like." I think of Thrillhouse first as a place where some of my friends have lived and second as one of the best places in SF to see a band play. But "Records" is right there in the name. They'd probably let you drink a beer while you shop, especially if you share and promise not to spill. I have to take a list or else I forget everything the second I walk in. They don't always have what I think I'm looking for, but they do usually have the things I've given up on finding. *Nowa Aleksandria* by Siekiera? No shit. I'll take that, thank you very much.

I think the three major rules of Thrillhouse are: Don't be a jerk. Don't attract the cops. Don't piss in the shower even if the bathroom line is crazy long.

E CONNER: Once Matty B. left a 32oz of Miller High Life full of his piss in the kitchen at Thrillhouse. Jackie B. stole it because she thought it was beer. She took it home with some dude and while she was in the bathroom he drank it. I tried to fight this wasted dude once. He spent all night basically harassing every queer person in the space and when he said some busted shit to me I lost it and tried to kick him out. He kept yelling "THIS IS MY HOME, THIS IS MYYYYY HOME" and wouldn't leave and then all of a sudden I jumped towards him ready to clobber but really I was like in the air with all of my limbs flailing and Fred was holding me from behind. Thanks, Fred.

MIKE: I met a girl who worked at a large thrift store in the SF Mission District. She was wearing a Subhumans UK shirt. I mentioned that I had seen them in Boston in 1983. I was aware of Thrillhouse already—although I admit I might be more of a

WEIRD TV – KITCHEN SHOW

metalhead, punk has always been near and dear to my heart. She would constantly mention Thrillhouse to me, and how much fun she was having there, being creative and seeing shows, being in bands. A passionate jealousy was ignited. Eventually I approached Fred, who to my surprise, knowing my curmudgeonly demeanor, accepted me as a volunteer. I've worked there on Saturdays for 75 weeks. One of the highlights was seeing Terry Malts play downstairs on a cold rainy January night.

Shit Zoo: A few years before moving to the Bay I went to a show at Thrillhouse. I couldn't tell you who played. I mainly remember drinking on the stairs and taking in the cold breeze of a San Francisco summer night. The show just felt like being at a friend's house in the city even though I knew so few people there. I ended up "working" Tuesday nights for a little over two years. Thrillhouse, to me, is one of the most archetypal punk ventures in all the best ways. It exists for punks and by punks.

Kevin DeFranco: I'll never forget the first show I saw there. I had only been in SF for under a week. It was the now defunct Shoppers and Crisco Thunder. I remember very fondly thinking that I had found my home that night.

Dan Gudgel: At basement shows, sometimes people hold onto the rafters to steady themselves. You can tell the crowd's about to really start dancing when all the hands go up to grab for the ceiling.

Zoë Leonard: I smashed a whole milk crate of wine bottles against the walls in the basement. I was just down there laughing and chucking the shards around and people kept coming to the door asking if I was okay. It took me a while to realize I was bleeding everywhere.

E Conner: The weirdest thing that ever happened to me at Thrillhouse was once I was practicing with a band I joined and their former bass player showed up to practice not knowing he had been replaced. I had just bought a case of beer, too! As he walked in our bandmates said, "We need to talk" and he retorted "I hope you're not going to tell me you're pregnant because I've already been through that *once* today!"

Lena Tahmassian: Thrillhouse is a not-for-profit record store, which makes it more like a makeshift community center. It believes in the value of music as a community building force. There you can encounter some of San Francisco's nearly extinct species: underage kids and people over 45. For the record nerds: it's the only record store in the Bay Area that I know of where you can actually listen to your records before you buy them, and definitely the only one where you can make a mixtape.

Cameron Jeffries: Pretty much all of the winter formal parties are my favorite parties of the year. It's kinda rad seeing a bunch of punks looking dapper and knowing that John Downing will always have a red frilly shirt.

JOHN DOWNING: We should probably burn that fucking red shirt!

E CONNER: The most vivid memory I have of Thrillhouse is waking up there and feeling horrible. It was the polyamorous summer of my life and I had slept with one date in their room while another one was sleeping in the living room. It was a fraught moment. Horrible, really.

BRYNN: I also once had a sleepwalking excursion that involved me jumping down from a half renovated part of the upstairs. Who knows why we do these things.

ZOË LEONARD: I tried to cram a dildo into the coffee maker. I thought it would be funny for someone to open it up to pour in water and find it. I couldn't get it in. When I pulled it out it had a dead cockroach stuck to it.

"THIS IS PART OF WHAT MAKES IT A GREAT PLACE, YOU GET TO BE HOWEVER YOU NEED TO BE AND THAT CAN BE DIFFERENT AT DIFFERENT TIMES...WHICH REALLY, IS ABOUT THE PEOPLE IT ATTRACTS AND I TRY NOT TO FORGET ABOUT THAT".

DAN GUDGEL: I know Robocop III was playing and I think Fred had just cut his hand punching the ceiling when one of the guys from Neon Piss started dropping flaming pieces of paper through a knothole in the floor from the record store. The basement was all draped with tinsel and streamers. That's one of the times when I thought, "Oh, we really could all die down here."

E CONNER: Once me and Barker were in the record store while bands were playing in the basement. I think it was during a winter formal. We started sticking stuff down the hole in the floor that goes into the basement. First, I stuck this necklace that looked like a snake I had down the hole and someone grabbed it and broke it. Then Barker got this weird look in his eye and rolled up a flier and lit it on fire. It was a real bad kid moment. He stuck the lit up flier down the hole and someone immediately grabbed it. People ran up the stairs yelling and screaming about how we were trying to burn the place down. Barker decreed, "Gotta go!"

MATTHEW WRENNE: One night, during an Acts of Sedition / Surrender show, the police showed up and shut down the show, but allowed the last band to finish their set. They reported the basement shows to the fire marshal who effectively put an end to these regularly scheduled live shows.

FRED: The next day the fire marshal was waiting outside when we opened up the store. He asked for a tour of the building. He didn't blink an eye at anything or even seem to care about anything we built until we got to the basement. When we got there he told us all the reasons why we shouldn't have shows in the basement. Afterwards we were passing through the kitchen on our way back to the front door and the he stopped and said, "See, this would be a much better place for a show. You have two fire exits, everything would be fine." And he gave us a weird smile. We waited about four months, then started throwing shows in the kitchen.

JOHN DOWNING: Those kitchen era shows were a blast! Replica, Condenada, Arctic Flowers, Culture Kids, RVIVR, Shellshag...to name a few. Everyone crammed into that tight space was something special. It got everyone talking, lots of friendships were forged in those days. It's amazing the kitchen and living room didn't collapse in on us during those shows. I guess we have Anders and his gonzo construction build to thank for that.

E CONNER: The best show I ever saw at Thrillhouse was probably Weird TV in like 2011. It was in the basement and I remember being right next to the drums and Lizet. Weird TV always felt special to see. A real alchemical band. This show felt like home with your favorite band. It was crowded lots of crazy girls up front. Sweaty and wreckless. People were taking their shirts off in a genuine way, not a gross way.

MATT BLEYLE: My most vivid memory of living at Thrillhouse is a time I was playing my guitar in my room. It was one of the bottom floor rooms right next to the living room / kitchen area. I was sitting on my bed and jamming away when all of a sudden a rat jumped in my face. It almost hit me. I've dealt with mice and rats before but never any aerial ones. I guess it had built a bit of a nest under my bed and I was in the direct line of fire.

ALEX MEDINA: What stood out to me the most at Thrillhouse is the fucking couch. The first time I sat on that couch, around 2013, it amazed me. I felt like the couch had possessive powers. It sucks how the couch is not put out anymore. In that couch I made out with a girl. Had many romantic moments. I had several people hang there and also have their moments. I did a little crying while drinking the three tall can pack of Modelos that I had purchased from the local market up the street. Did some doodling and tried to make shitty poems. I slept there after I closed the shop. Smoked a bowl of weed. That couch was ripped and looked grimy but was the most chillest couch I ever sat at.

DAN GOETZ: I have way too many memories associated with Thrillhouse: Seeing and playing countless great shows over the years (living room era is probably my favorite). Booking a Contaminators show that completely fell apart the day before, and ended up not happening. My old band's first and last shows, ending where we started. Jumping on vocals for a band when the singer didn't show up. Playing Monopoly in the kitchen one night, where Fred got hotels on Park Place and Boardwalk, but

let the other players get one free stop before gouging them out of the game. Zoe breaking my glasses while crowdsurfing during the 2015 winter formal photoshoot. Periodically supplying bootleg pins before the store got its own button maker. Learning the true definition of Bay Area flakiness when hearing about people bailing on their volunteer shifts because they didn't feel like leaving Dolores Park. Seeing the store steadily expand and improve over the years. And let's not forget that Thrillhouse also spearheaded the various BART generator shows that happened a few years back. Do generator shows even happen in the Bay anymore?

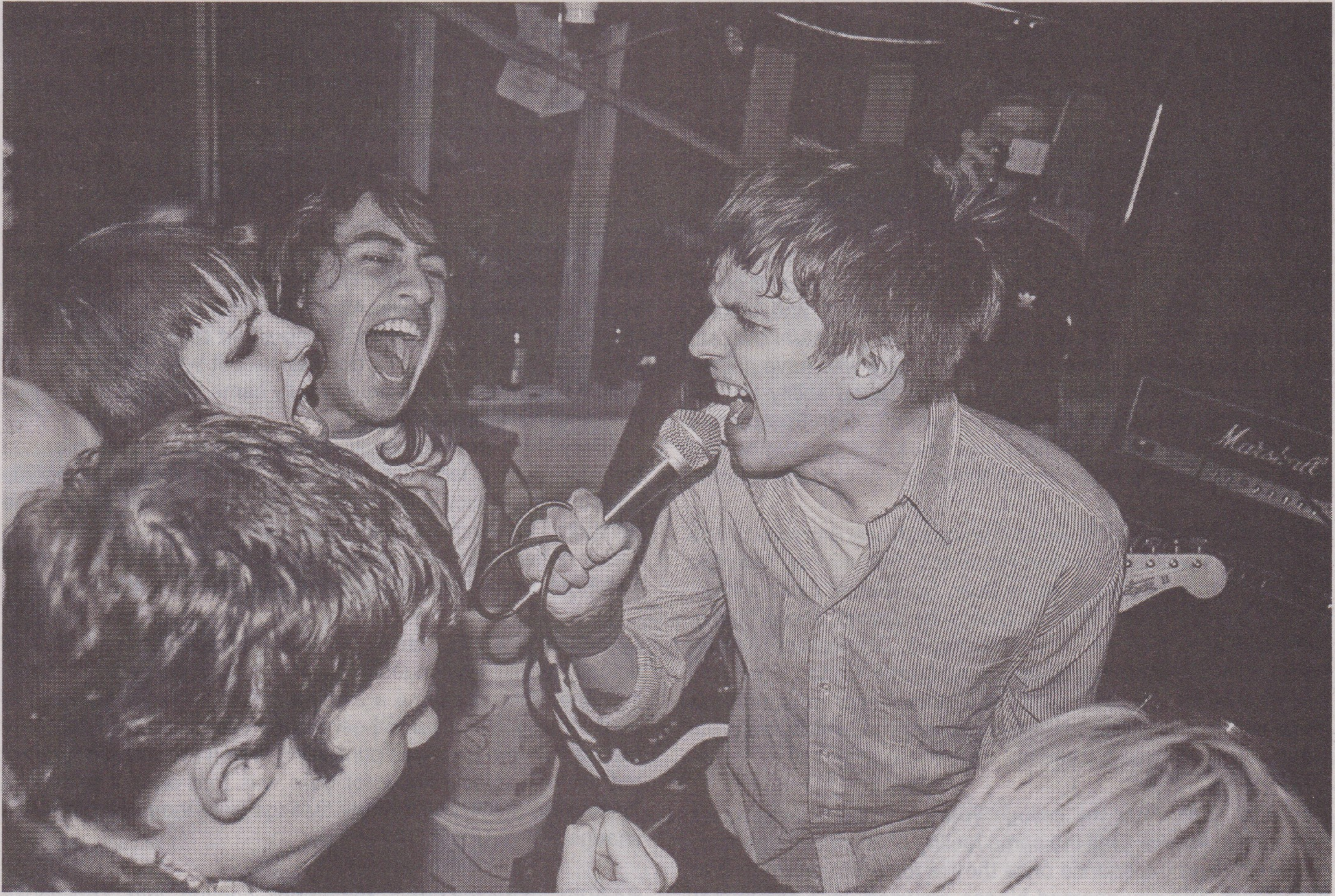
DANIELLE MCVAY: I got sober at Thrillhouse, literally. Culture Kids and Jump Off a Building were playing and I was just like… "Fuck it! I'm done and I don't think anyone here will care and I bet they'll even have my back." This is part of what makes it a great place, you get to be however you need to be and that can be different at different times...Which really, is about the people it attracts and I try not to forget about that.

EMMA CONROY: For my fifteenth birthday, I bought myself a record player off of Amazon. It was a piece of shit. The only redeemable thing about it was that it was mine. I googled "record shop." Thrillhouse was only a couple of blocks away, so on my first free weekend, I wandered over there and I remember sheepishly walking in past the overhang. There was either loud metal or punk playing but at the time, I probably couldn't have told you the difference. I was on a mission to get Green Day records. I was torn between buying *Nimrod* and *Dookie* and I decided on *Dookie*. This was the first record I really bought for myself.

I went up to the counter and I was chatting with the volunteer. We talked about music and records, and he gave me some great band recommendations that I still listen to today. He asked me if I'd ever thought about volunteering. I was completely shocked by this. My first question was, "Is this even allowed?" He said that he didn't know but that I should check back in if I wanted to. So I did. I started that summer and have been volunteering ever since.

My first day as a volunteer, I was suppose to meet Fred at the front of the store at noon on a Sunday. He was 20 minutes late, and I was convinced that he had forgotten about me when suddenly he appeared. He unlocked the store and told me all about it, he showed me the light switches, how to turn on the open sign, the seemingly abandoned arcade machine, the makeshift cash box and the incredibly intimidating card machine. He then handed me a key to the store, and I swear I could feel my heart in my throat. I was already so afraid of not knowing enough about music to work there, being too young to do anything useful despite being so eager and excited to learn about punk. I was expecting just to be helping sort records for the summer, and yet here I was left alone in charge of things. I don't think I could ever thank Thrillhouse enough for taking me in, teaching me, and most importantly trusting me when most adults really wouldn't have.

DAN GUDGEL: More people maybe know the record store entrance, but I think the more interesting way to get in and



THE VICIOUS – BASEMENT SHOW

out of Thrillhouse is the wooden alley that runs alongside the building. It feels like you're in the wrong place and like the floor will give out any second. You should probably watch for holes in the planks. Don't breathe too deep. I remember a really rattled looking pigeon trying to get some sleep in there one night while all the punks trooped through.

Zoë Leonard: We found a baby pigeon in the back. We put it in a milk crate and the parents came and checked on it and fed it. Whenever we had a show (which was at least once a week at that point) we would move the milk crate so the bird didn't get smashed. We named it Scrap, it learned to fly, found another pigeon to nest with and moved in to the side hall. That family of pigeons is still shitting in there. Right now.

Fred: Late one night around 2012 Kevin DeFranco and I were smoking cigarettes out front of Thrillhouse and this undercover cop came up and flashed us his badge. He said he was part of an undercover task force investigating the "illegal parties" we were having (he meant shows). He said he knew we were just kids having fun and he didn't find anything personally wrong with what we were doing. But if we wanted to avoid any entanglement with the cops, that we should lay low for a while. They were building a file on us. We immediately canceled all our shows and didn't have another one until almost a year later.

"THRILLHOUSE IS LIKE PUNK. IT'S DIRTY. IT'S SCRUFFY. IT'S KIND OF FALLING APART. IT'S COMPLETELY FALLING APART. PEOPLE DON'T REALLY KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON INSIDE OF IT UNLESS YOU'RE A PART OF IT."

Cooper: My most cherished memories of the record store have almost nothing to do with music. Am I happy that there is a record store that stocks obscure powerviolence and Finnish D-beat singles? Sure, but the best thing about Thrillhouse has been its role as punk totem, a place that can motivate even the most cynical Oaklander to occasionally cross the Bay and brave the ever grimmer specter of conspicuous wealth and electric skateboards. Thrillhouse is a warm fire in a perpetual blizzard of douchebaggery. Thrillhouse and the people who have helped it along the last ten years have a preternatural ability to filter out the bullshit and afford the weary punks of San Francisco a sigh of relief. Some of the best memories and most important lessons I gleaned from my time volunteering behind the counter.

David Montoya: I got to see so many great local Bay Area bands there when I was living in San Francisco. Some of my favorites like Livid, Cher Horowitz, Moira Scar, Sourpatch, Culture Kids, Rank / Xerox, Grass Widow, Songs for Moms, Deep Teens, Brilliant Colors, Femme Teen, Robocop 3, Displeasure, Tender Buttons, Mugwort, Black Rainbow, Alabaster Choad, Red Red Red, that sick Cure cover band, and more. I think most of these ones happened upstairs in the living room area, which was great cause everyone was packed in.

Francis Ray: After my college years in Long Beach, and a brief stint in Alaska, I felt the same feeling of displacement many people my age experience once they're forced to return to their hometown. The city seemed bigger, crowded, less communal, and more materialistic. I was disappointed to see so much of the cultures I had grown up around become sanitized for the influx of new residents and money.

I remember going to Trader Joe's, and seeing someone with a Thursday "dove" tattoo. I complimented them, and they told me about Thrillhouse, which apparently had been around since I was in high school. I heard of Thrillhouse while I was in school, but never took it upon myself to go to any shows or be a part of that community. I went to the store, bought some records, and signed up for volunteer hours. My time in Alaska taught me the value of strong community, especially when it is community standing up against the odds of environment. I witnessed a powerful music scene while living in Fairbanks, which was surprising given the lack of the amenities, such as a record store, that typically come with a vibrant underground scene. These amenities were things I took for granted while living in San Francisco as a teenager, and this time I did not intend to ignore the power of these institutions. I relished my time opening up the shop, making friends, exchanging music, and watching shows. In light of all the fucked up stuff going on around the world and at home, the value that havens like Thrillhouse have has never been more clear. More impressive is how everyone can band together and contribute, even when it becomes more difficult to do so. I am normally afraid of my favorite places and things being shut down by shifting dynamics in the city or the passage of time, but I never worry about Thrillhouse. Maybe it's because I know that communities as strong as these always flourish.

Courtney: For those of us who missed out in their early scene it's cool to watch old video recordings, especially "Mondo Vision" to really get a sense of the punk fun, carefree days of being young(er). Since moving to SF, I instantly became friends with the Thrillhouse community. The first time I met Fred, about five years ago, I was nervous. After talking for a bit he found out I did art and was like, "You should do an art show at Thrillhouse!" What? It was that easy? I don't know if it was intimidation, or lack of material, but that never really came to fruition. Instead, I just hung out there a lot.

Since then so much change and progress has transformed the store into a legit, fully stocked, one of a kind, *awesome* record store. It took a lot of hard work, and endless trips to the dump and hardware store to make it all happen, and damn does it look better and better every day. Here's to ten more years of San Francisco's best volunteer-run punk records store!

Lorraine Petel: Thrillhouse was the first place in my life that actually felt like I belonged in the punk scene. I grew up on punk. It shaped me. I became a student at UC Berkeley because of punk. There could have been many reasons why I felt very distant from the Bay Area punk scene when I was an undergrad, but the one thing I knew for sure was that once I became a Thrillhouse staffer, a lot of my feelings from the past four years changed.

Raquel Openiano: I remember coming into Thrillhouse Records for the first time and thinking "Holy shit, everything

WINTER FORMAL CHAOS...

here is actually affordable." I'm pretty sure I spent about two and a half hours here and left with the most legit purchases without feeling guilty on how much I spent. The minute I found out it was all volunteer run, of course I asked "how do I join?" When you work a shitty 9–5 and tend to feel like your life may be lacking some kind of substance, there's Thrillhouse. For me, it kept me sane. I love music but being a part of something that has some kind of genuity and rawness is something else on it's own. Getting to know the people here whether or not it's staff, regulars, or someone new, has given me a better perspective on this city but overall, myself

BRYNN: There's a very large space in my heart and life in SF for Thrillhouse. Thrillhouse was many things for me. My first show in SF was there! And the majority of them after that. I joined my first band with Fred, Tosh, and WC in the basement. I spent many nights there. It was my home away from home for a good chunk of time. Every show there was complete with one or two slices of Zante's Indian pizza and a 40 oz.

JOSCELYN MEADOR: Thrillhouse is community. And It especially was in those early years. You always knew where you could find your friends. On Sundays folks knew that they could find a hoard of ladies drinking champagne and concocting the most ridiculous meals from whatever was around. Or having pool parties on the sidewalk (also known as mission beach). Thrillhouse solidified old friendships and built new ones.

TOBY: Going to Thrillhouse more often encouraged us to attend local live shows more. After finishing a shift there, we would find a venue where there was a show happening. On most Saturday nights, there were many random shows to check out. When we found out that Thrillhouse did shows, we were stoked. In 2010 at Thrillhouse, shows would mainly happen at night in the living room just behind the curtains of the storefront. It didn't require a lot people to pack up the room. Without Thrillhouse, we wouldn't have learned about punk rock or the DIY movement. I'm glad that this store is still open today for many to experience. I know definitely it was a life-changing experience for me.

DAN GOETZ: Top ten live sets: La Fraction, Jump Off A Building, Lebenden Toten, Lybians, Vial, Agatha, Big Eyes, Culture Kids, No Statik, Silent Era.

TANYA QUINLAN: The random scrawlings and art that adorns the walls of the store. Very broken coffee cups that continue to be used (still good!). Half working toilet with helpful instructions on how to flush. Being surprised one shift when a goth girl emerged from the store closet (her bedroom). Drunkenly critiquing album covers with friends and strangers. And so many cool conversations around music.

KEN SANDERSON: There's band stickers covering on the walls. They've purposely painted around the years of layers of stickers, graffiti and scrawled messages. There's an entire dollar bin filled with Marty Robbins albums. There's an unwavering devotion to

THRILLHOUSE CIRCA 2017

VHS tapes. There's the newest punk records for probably the lowest prices you can find in a 400 mile radius. There's a drunk guy behind the counter, or at least he's on his way. There's a guy recording soul 45s onto one of their $1 cassette tapes at the listening station for hours. There's mismatched chairs they must have found on the street where you can hang out. There's almost any local punk band's demo, 45 or LP that walks in the door. There's unlimited plays on a free video arcade machine to kill time while your friend records soul 45s at the listening station for hours. There's a $400 Jawbreaker LP on the wall, or at least there was until someone actually bought it—which is kind of crazy if you think about it. There's a band practicing in the basement, or well, at least there should be if their bass player ever gets here with the amps. There's leaves, pigeon feathers and wrappers from the next-door 7-11 that nest on their windswept corner, no matter how much you sweep. There's scrawled all-caps notes from Michael, a kind and friendly man who stops by and often writes them as gifts for the staff. There's that record that you meant to order, but it sold out online immediately months ago and you thought was gone forever, waiting for you. There's a copy of Black Flag's *Nervous Breakdown*, because it's the store's all-time bestselling record. There's a wall of flyers for shows, stapled and taped over each other, and you kick yourself because you should've brought yours to put up. There's the newest issue of *Scam, MRR, Razorcake, Cometbus*, and then like a twenty-year-old issue of *No Answers* for $2. There's an *Age of Quarrel* promo poster that absolutely, positively is not for sale. There's a chunk of Billy Joel *The Stranger* LP on the wall. Some guy came in, paid $3 for it and then smashed it in half, saying he was doing the world a favor. There's a full selection of Billy Joel LPs, including *The Stranger, Glass Houses,* and *Songs in the Attic*. There's full sections of every Naked Raygun, Discharge, and Misfits record. There's a movie screen that occasional unfurls to show, I dunno, *Burst City* or *Meatballs*. There's a sticker-covered boom box for sale for $10. It would be $20 but only one of the two tape decks works, but maybe you can fix it. There's a huge box of new stuff from Ebullition that's going out as soon as they write all those little white tags. There's kids volunteering and hanging out, shooting the shit and DJing songs who will tell you hilarious stories. There's a buncha spray-painted, pen-painted and scrawled skulls also on the walls, but the fire-breathing dinosaur is still AWOL. There's a couple of really hard to find Japanese and Spanish punk records and band demos you're stoked to finally find.

JOHN NO: On the real / polemic tip, though—what does Thrillhouse *mean* to me? To me, and I am pretty sure to many others, Thrillhouse Records represents something sacred, precious, and extremely threatened: 1) A long-lasting sustainable collective space (in San Francisco, no less!) Thriving in the cracks between several legal statuses and through extreme pressure from the city, landlords, and development interests. 2) It has been run by and for the punks across multiple generations. And 3) These punks happen to operate it as what is essentially a not-for-profit business, dedicated to service as a booster and support for the culture it is knee-deep in and the people who live and breathe that culture as their life.

In other words, Thrillhouse is a straight-up antidote and necessary counterweight to the hyper-capitalist world it sits squarely in the literal middle of. It is an institution that rejects the idea of institutions but keeps all the best aspects of them. Thrillhouse is people: smart, ethical, scrappy, resilient, and dedicated to creating something that represents a real alternative to what is shoved daily down our throats. It is something powerful that supports the community it is part of, and that we need to support in return.

LENA TAHMASSIAN: Thrillhouse shows are some of my favorite shows I've been to in SF over the last ten years. All of the anniversary party shows are great because people really go wild celebrating the existence of Thrillhouse—a particularly fond remembrance is of the wedding covers band. I also loved the Silent Era record release show, which I got to play as well. It was special to have friends gathered on a summer afternoon at Thrillhouse.

LORRAINE PETEL: It's funny, because every time I was a staffer at Thrillhouse, I was going through some pretty stressful and isolating times in my life, but the people at Thrillhouse and what Thrillhouse stood for to me and the community around me seemed to allow those stressful moments to become something more productive and fulfilling whenever I was in the burgundy Bernal Heights punk house. The place made sense to me. It still does.

EMMA CONROY: Thrillhouse is like punk. It's dirty. It's scruffy. It's kind of falling apart. It's completely falling apart. People don't really know what's going on inside of it unless you're a part

of it. But if you've ever walked inside of it or talked to anyone who's been inside of it, you know that it's definitely been one of the coolest places to spend the majority of my teenage years. Whether you're doing an ungodly amount of labeling, daring your best friend to test out the new electric flyswatter on her arm, listening to music, or just staring at the bins there was never a place I'd rather be on my Friday night.

DAVID MONTOYA: Fuck gentrification. I'm really glad that Thrillhouse is still around. I hope you guys keep it going 'cause the kids need a place to gather and the city needs it. It's a huge part of the dying subculture there.

SHIT ZOO: In a city besieged by yuppies and tech-fascists, Thrillhouse is a rare punk holdout and I'm lucky to have been part of it in any small way. Support the spaces in your own town if you can—only we can make this shit for us

TOSH: To me, and maybe a few others, there will always be an imaginary delineation between that young, reckless, passionate Thrillhouse, and the Thrillhouse of today (one without scabies in the couches). Of course, it's really not true. Thrillhouse has simply endured as a punk mainstay of San Francisco—offering youth of all ages a place to be reckless and passionate, a place to make noises and mistakes, a place to make friends and a space to gain some freedoms.

GODDAMNIT JONNY: The world is full of shit. Everywhere you look, all around you, it's just a bunch of shit. We in the Bay Area are getting increasingly used to everything being shit. You look at the giant holes in the ground as you travel down Mission Street and see where greedy landlords burned down affordable housing to sell their land to condo developers and all you can think is "this is shit." When good things do happen, it's never for very long. A punk house might pop up for a year and then disappear when people start missing rent and the landlord decides they're fed up. A venue might stick around for a few years before they go totally broke, but eventually the good stuff goes away and you're left with shit. But you take that time and you relish in it. You try to appreciate every shitty punk show

you go to there, and every drunk conversation you had with someone that meant the world to you at the exact moment, and every dumb fight you got into at that place because someone said something about someone else or something like that. So when you have a space like Thrillhouse that has stuck around for ten whole goddamn years, you really pour yourself into it. It's not just about cherishing the moments at Thrillhouse anymore—it's about building a way for people to keep having them. Right now the pressure is on.

The DIY community in the Bay Area has been struck with one shit-biscuit of a blow and is fighting hard to repair itself. So I could talk about all the fond memories I've had at Thrillhouse, but instead I'd rather remind everyone that we desperately need Thrillhouse to survive so we can keep making memories there. There's a lot of work that we need to do and we can't do it without help. 2017 has to be dedicated to rebuilding what was broken in 2016. I don't know what San Francisco's dwindling punk scene would look like without Thrillhouse in it, and I don't want to. Thrillhouse is a place where you can see an awesome show, sell your demo to the kid behind the counter, buy your favorite record, make a new friend, and get shit-canned, all in the same afternoon. That's beautiful, that's necessary. For a healthy community, we need that. We need Thrillhouse. I need Thrillhouse.

BREAK FREE

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Break Free fest is a new POC punk fest being organized by Scout Cartagena. If you're within driving distance of Philadelphia, find yourself at the Rotunda on May 27th. You won't regret it.

Interview by Grace Ambrose
Photos by Angela Owens, Jaime Salazar, and Joe Evans.

MRR: How is the fest organized? Scout, I'm interviewing you, but is there a collective of folks behind it? How are decisions made and how is responsibility divided?

The fest was organized after my frustrations with the punk and hardcore scene. I felt there wasn't much representation, that I had to subscribe to white struggles instead of those of other POC, and that I wasn't welcomed naturally like cis white men. I also kept hearing my friends' legit concerns about how they were perceived and treated and felt like things needed to change. Honestly, I had some friends give me help with the name and some venue ideas since I'm new to Philadelphia, but really it's just me trying to make this thing happen. I am being helped by Bruce Howze, Jr. Bruce is in many projects but extended help with his company SRA Records by backlining and reaching out to bands for me.

Decisions are made really from examples of successful local shows I've seen and general things I want to see happen to make this show different from the rest. I've just been doing anything I can every day to keep it going, reaching out to Faiza (Body Pressure) and Pierce (Soul-Glo) for help and pointers, and reaching out to anyone who wants to help to spread the word. I understand that people would be concerned that maybe it would seem difficult to hold myself accountable because I am a lone person trying to put this fest together. But at the same time, I am very open to input and suggestions and I try to implement every idea that has been thrown my way in a way that lets others know that I value their input without losing sight of the broader idea.

MRR: You're hosting the fest at a venue in Philly that has a long history of punk shows. In recent years it has been more focused on other kinds of performance, though. What kinds of factors were important to you when selecting a venue? Did the neighborhood the fest was in matter? Is the fact that is a sober space important to you?

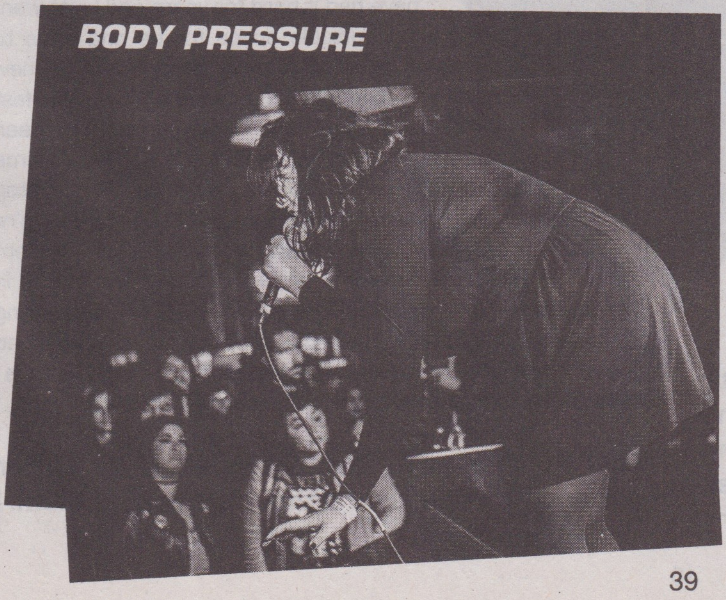
When I heard The Rotunda had punk shows in the past, I immediately googled it. I wanted a venue that could hold over 200 people, had some Philly history, and was accessible to everyone. When I saw how beautiful the space was and that it was a handicap accessible space, I was siked. It took some fighting but we were able to get my dream date. Gina Renzi is amazing and I'm so happy to have her help in all this. The venue is a sober space, which does make it easier to hold an all-ages show so I'm happy this'll get more people in.

MRR: Are there festivals or events (punk or otherwise) that inspired you in your organization process?

There are soooo many amazing fests happening right now and I love it. Electrifest, Get Better Fest, and Book Your Own Fest have been big influences. I like that these fests are being booked and fronted by people who are from marginalized communities. For so long me and my friends have heard that if we are feeling frustrations within the scene that it is up to us to carve out space within the scene so it is so great to see all of us just getting out and doing it! And the fact

SOUL-GLO

BODY PRESSURE



that the proceeds from the fests are going back to these same communities is just so awesome. It really shows that we are in this for each other and want to help each other survive and thrive the best ways we can. I've been creepily admiring the way they've put their fests together and been taking notes because they make it look so easy. Though I'm sure it's not, this is my first fest / show I've ever put together and I've quickly learned it's a lot (especially to do on one's own).

MRR: Did you discover any hidden black and brown Philly punk histories in the process of planning the fest that you think people should know about?

Absolutely, yes, Philly does have a very vibrant and rich history of black and brown punks. I did learn that there's an awesome history of black and brown punks in Philly, which was refreshing compared to other places I've lived. Like Pure Hell, an all-black punk band, coming up during the best time in the 1970s. Sadly, lately I've felt that's no longer the case. I didn't discover any hidden histories but I've heard amazing stories of older punks and hardcore folks who've been to shows before my time and it's been eye opening. One thing that I find interesting in Philly is that POC try to use their culture and fuse it into punk culture. There are a couple black punks in Philly who are rappers and one guy in particular plays bass in one band, then afterwards, will perform his own hip-hop set. At the same show! There was also a trap and punk show in the past year.

At some point last year there was a show in West Philly with a band from Mexico that played a benefit show to highlight the police violence that the people in Oaxaca have had to endure. At the show, there was a white bed sheet that was repurposed as a banner and was making its way around the US before heading back to Mexico. It was really cool being in that space among black and brown punks, white punks too, and seeing that banner filling with anti-cop messaging in English and Spanish.

This is for the punk and hardcore kids who were told they were listening to "white music." This is for the bands who speak their native tongue and are told no one will understand them. This is for those who constantly find themselves shoved to the back. This is for the misrepresented in a music scene that they feel so passionate about. This is for us. For years punk and hardcore have been deemed white genres of music, pushing aside and ignoring people of color who have been shaping it for years. This fest wants to bring those people together and to the front to represent the many different groups who make this music the most diverse genre many claim it to be.

MRR: What is the mission of Break Free Fest? What were the factors that went into selecting bands? There is a black and brown fest happening here in the Bay Area soon with the rule "no whites on the mic." Do you have similar guidelines? Why is it important to have this show in Philly right now?

The mission of Break Free Fest is to create a space for people of color. Since I could remember people have been accusing people of color of acting white for liking punk and hardcore, despite roots like Sister Rosetta Tharpe or Fishbone. It's like people forgot punk was made as a movement against the normal; so working class people could fight through music no matter where you were from. I don't want people to forget that. I don't want people to see me or other black and brown folks and monitor us closely, or mistake us constantly for other black and brown punks, or make us feel like we don't belong. I want marginalized folks' messages to be heard with an audience that understands what all that's like.

Punk has done so much for me but it's also made me realize I have to start using the messages it taught me to create spaces for others. I picked bands that I saw using their platforms to speak on issues they were passionate about. I also picked artists from local and far away so that folks who couldn't travel could feel what I felt when I saw them live or listened to their tapes. I like that "no whites on the mic." That was definitely my goal here. No offense to anyone, but I just couldn't see someone white singing and playing a fest geared towards reaching people of color. I wanted representation and I am so happy to have the bands that I do now because they're perfect.

I made this show to bring light to punk and hardcore by people of color. Their voices are the ones I'm concerned about, especially with the way our country has been going. People of color have had it hard for years and I just want a comfortable space for us and allies to come together to enjoy good music. I'm new to Philly, and every day I've worked on this fest I've learned about how it runs socially. I've been impressed by the DIY spaces but I think it's time we stopped pretending this barrier doesn't exist, stop pretending it's just "SJW cry babies" and realize we're silencing legit concerns of marginalized folks. This problem isn't Philly specific, this is a problem that I have noticed in every scene in every city that I have lived. So there was nothing particularly special about Philly—this show could have happened in any US city with a punk scene. It is happening in Philly because I wanted to hold a fest in the city I'm starting to call home.

MRR: Some people say activities that center oppressed groups just further marginalize them. I

would say that they are dead wrong! What's your response?

I agree, they're dead wrong. I would rather cause a fuss to make a POC fest than have constant misrepresentation.Representation is so important. Coming up as a young punk it is so hard to feel like you belong when white people are saying "fuck the police" as a slogan but you are saying "fuck the police" with intensity because they just slaughtered another innocent black person for no reason. But then people try to tell you punk isn't for you. Or they ask you to teach them how to twerk during the breakdown. I want people to see and recognize that POC belong in punk as much as Chad from suburbia, and that ultimately were all just looking for the same thing; we are all people who have been outcasts at some point, branded as the weirdo or the freak, and we are looking for people who understand us. But it is so hard when you are trying to connect and they treat you like a freak within freaks. There are POC all over the US who only connect to Punx of Color online via Facebook or Instagram, or Tumblr, and I want to create a space where we can all see each other and recognize that we exist outside of the margins of the internet.

I have seen so much unity since Trump put himself in the running and I honestly think people do beautiful things when they become intersectional by banding together, even if they don't experience these problems in their own lives or social circles.

S-21

MRR: What was the biggest surprise you encountered when organizing the festival?

The biggest surprise I encountered was dealing with Twitter! Before I had even started booking bands I heard people were disgruntled with me creating this fest. I couldn't believe people were so upset that I wanted to create a fest where the proceeds went to local benefits like the Mazzoni Center and the Attic Youth Center. Both are amazing places that help the LGBTQIA community and I think it's important that if you're making events like this you try to help local causes you care about. Punk isn't just about music, it's been more than that for years.

MRR: I think benefits are important but also at the end of the day, marginalized people are often the ones who are asked to step up and raise money for their own communities. Paying bands is an important part of keeping a punk ecosystem thriving. Which approach are you taking?

Weirdly, I have noticed marginalized shows are usually benefit shows. Maybe that's because some of us grew up in those communities, maybe it's because we have a sense of how hard it is to not be cishet and white, but regardless, it's great to see. I'm still paying the bands though. I asked how they wanted to be compensated, just so I could get a sense of how much travel and such was, and a good amount of them didn't want to be paid. Many were happy to just be asked to be a part of something like this which, not gonna lie, made me tear up. I plan to pay them the money we agreed on and donate the rest to the Mazzoni Center and the Attic. I'll also have a donation jar for anyone who wants to give a little extra, and the bands are going to have merchandise to table. A cool idea I saw from a fest was to ask for donations to have people table. So, we're going to have a vegan table for more information and a table by artists of color with zines and merchandise. I'm hoping this year will go well so maybe next year we can do two days, and have a spotlight for artists of color to sell their work before the show.

MRR: Someone's coming to visit Philly for the fest and they have an extra day in town—what should they do? Any must see Philly spots? What's your perfect Philly day?

Oh man! So I love eating and this city is no disappointment, especially if you are vegan or vegetarian. Govinda's, Black Bird, Tattooed Mom, V Street, Grindcore House (those bagels with jalapeno cream cheese!) are all good spots. I'm still new to this city but those are places I usually hit up. There are tons of awesome shops and record stores around. Wooden Shoe was the first place I ever shopped at. It's an amazing volunteer-run, nonprofit bookshop that has so many goodies. I could spend hours in there. Also, I just learned the Philadelphia Chinese Lantern Festival is running 'til June! It's showcasing Chinese artisan work and it'll feature amazing food from the beautiful Chinatown jawns here. I can't wait to go! My perfect day is to take my dog to the Schuylkill dog park, grab some "wooter" ice, grab some records or shop on Walnut, and stuff my face at Tattooed Mom with a vegan fried chicken sandwich and beer!

Get your tickets for Break Free Fest before it sells out: facebook.com/breakfreefest.

Occult Whispers Records

Air Hunger
Debut 7" single from members of Cemetery, The Flatfield and Blue Cross/Zex. Gothpunk for Punk Goths.

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International dark punk compilation. Spectres, Crimson Scarlet, Pawns and more. 14 tracks.

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LOW CULTURE - PLACES TO HIDE LP

MACHO BOYS - DEMO TAPE

SILENT ERA - S/T 7"

SUICIDAS - BAILE DES MASCARAS 7"

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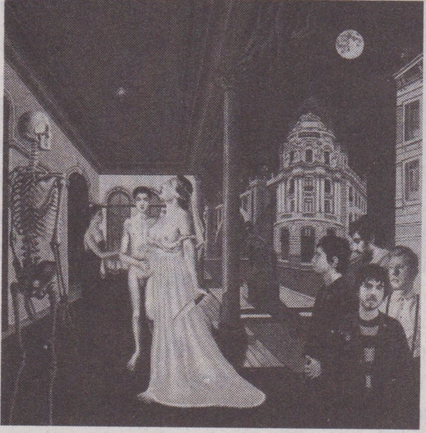
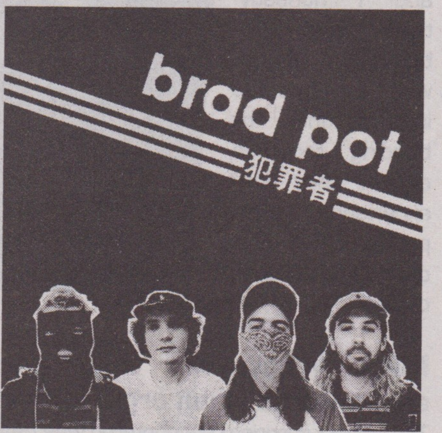


BIZNAGA (Madrid, ES)
Sentido del Espectáculo LP / CD

MORAL PANIC (NYC, USA)
Self-Titled vinyl LP only



BRAD POT (Melbourne, AU)
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CONTROL FREAKS lp (feat. Greg Lowery!) CAVEMEN 7"!

Kaleidoscope

Kaleidoscope dropped Volume 1 sometime in the early summer of 2015, a demo that incorporates the never-ending soundscape of New York's municipal infrastructure with such precision that it could not have been made anywhere else. Commingling samples of the city's industrial ambiance & field recordings from its transportation arteries (among other samples and sounds) with raw, internationally influenced hardcore punk was an ambitious home recording experiment with a high payoff. Volume 1 ranks among the most unique and memorable of punk's recent history.

Some time later, I ran into guitarist Shiva who mentioned that the group would be playing their first show soon, to which I wondered, "How you gonna pull that off?" He shot back something along the lines of, "Well, we've got Owen now and have been practicing a lot lately" as if unconcerned by my unspoken inner dialogue: how can you recreate in a live setting a project whose uniqueness is at least due in part to the experimentation that is so perfectly incubated in home recording scenarios? I needn't have worried. When the band took stage for their first gig that November, they did so as a three piece HC punk band—no samplers, no saxophones, no Moog, nuthin'—and ripped through a ferocious set.

The economic reality of this city dictates that communal living is a necessity of survival. Living together like the Arkestra, the members of Kaleidoscope have embraced this, not only pooling resources to get by but embracing the spiritual intensity and impact on creativity that can come with maintaining close quarters with collaborators. Their journey has been documented in subsequent volumes of recordings—*Through The Looking Glass* cassette (D4MT Labs), *Vol. 2 No. 1 7"* (Katorga Works), *Vol. 2 No. 2: Zone Explorers* cassette (D4MT Labs), and the upcoming *Vol. 3* 12" (Feel It)—that provide evidence of a group that is continually evolving yet at the core has an immediately recognizable style and vision. Hear "Out There" become "Zone Explorers" or "Transit Fare" morph into "Satellite," as Kaleidoscope seems to enjoy revisiting songs and themes, mining the same territory from all angles rather than cut once and move on. Leave no stone unturned.

Kaleidoscope doesn't seem interested in being any one thing. They are the exceedingly rare punk band that has a cohesive and unique vision yet no interest in trying to pigeonhole themselves into genre conventions. They can expand and experiment and be whatever—a raucous punk band, home recording scientists, free jazz auteurs. The songs are resilient enough to become whatever it is the group is curious to try. As such, they prove that hardcore need not be a limited form. It has and will continue to be exhilarating to witness this group find new ways to express themselves and fly the punk flag high.

Introduction by Dave Hyde. Interview conducted by Sam Richardson on February 11, 2017 in the living room of Kaleidoscope's home, Brooklyn, NY.

Photos by Garett Fisbeck and Dave Hyde.

Art by D4MT Labs / Shiva Addanki.

Kaleidoscope is Shiva (guitar / vocals), Joe (bass), and Owen (drums).

MRR: So you guys all live together now?
Shiva: We just moved in together in September after we got back from that cross-country tour. Then we all kind of split off for a second, I toured back with JJ Doll. Joe and Owen were traveling around. Then we found a place. We lucked out pretty hard.

MRR: How did you guys know each other before starting Kaleidoscope? Had you played music together before?
Shiva: Yeah, so me and Joe were in Deformity together. We've known each other since we were twelve. Been friends for like eleven years now, skateboarding and playing music together. We started Kaleidoscope because Deformity was not happening anymore. Initially it was a thing that Joe and I would do to make music, all sorts of music, any kind of thing we wanted to do in whatever configuration. Then we really just wanted to have a band of that.

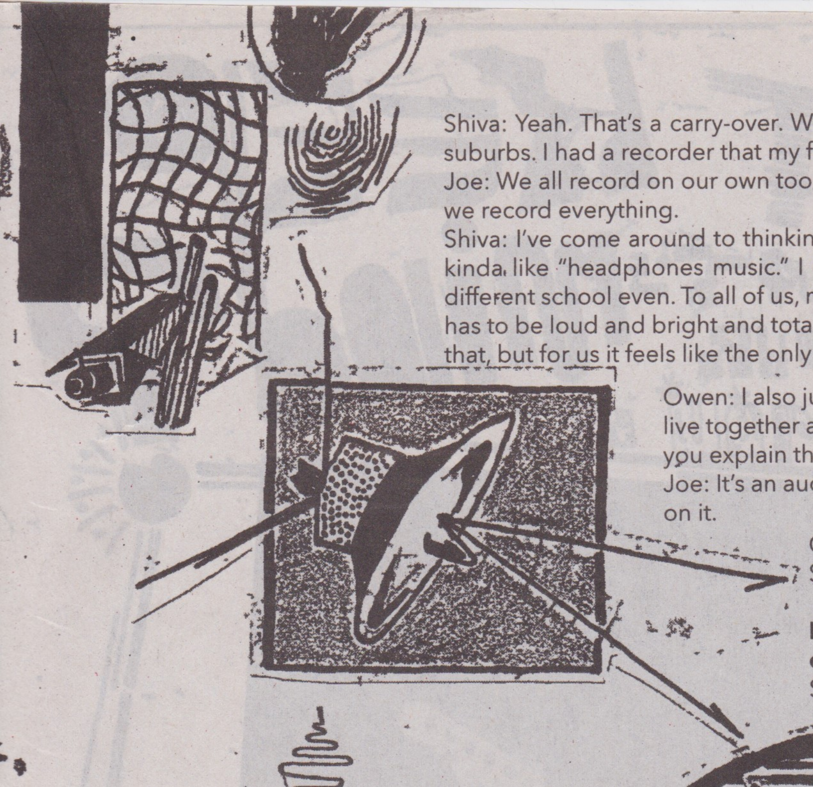
We were talking to Owen and showing him the recordings that we made, which is *Volume 1*. And then Owen joined up and was just perfect, made it way more tight and together. More of a unit and less of an amorphous thing. Owen was coming out of left field, a dude who would record albums on his own when he was in high school. I feel more kindred with that than all of hardcore punk. All together it's more consequential to us...it means something even if people just see us as a hardcore punk band that's out there being slightly bizarre.

MRR: Did you have anything mapped out for the band when it started? Was it always a plan to release Kaleidoscope output in volumes?
Shiva: When we initially did that first tape we wanted it to just encompass everything, right? We wanted it to be so open in this way that you organize it...in this really sort-of dry, official way.
Owen: The volume stuff is fun because it's more like transmissions.
Shiva: Yeah, it's more like a prompt to like...
Owen: ...continue on.
Shiva: To hurdle, to get through something that has to be a discrete unit and then come back to it fresh. Punk bands can't really do albums and we're not a band like that. It's kind of a way of tweaking our minds.
Owen: Well once you say, *"Volume 1"* it's like, "Where's *Volume 2*?" But then what we did for *Volume 2* is we split it up. We wanted to do more material because we were active, doing a lot. So there's *Vol. 2 No. 1* which is the 7" and *Vol. 2 No. 2* which is the *Zone Explorers* tape. So that's another way to make *Vol. 2* have two arms.
Shiva: And with *Volume 3* it's just the 12". We're hopefully going to be releasing videos around it. The packaging is going to be very encompassing. All the lyrics will be presented and all the imagery will work together. It's supposed to comprise a lot of work that we've been doing. It's a way to incite ourselves—
Owen: Yeah, it feels evolutionary to say, *"Volume 1, 2, 3..."*.
Shiva: —To work hard and come up with new ideas for each one. To make us have to fucking say something with what we're doing, make it count a little more to ourselves. I think to most people it's probably just a title. I think it works in our minds to organize it like that.

MRR: Do you write songs in a similar frame of mind then?
Shiva: Well one thing that it kinda permits is we splice out fragments from old songs.
Owen: Even Deformity songs.
Shiva: Deformity songs, whatever, riffs that are around. But you have to twist that into something else.
Owen: That logic is kind of backwards. It's not written volume-wise. It's really fluid in the organizational principle of a volume.
Shiva: Like time stamping.
Joe: The volumes come after the fact. We just write.
Shiva: We don't go in with a particular agenda, ever.
Owen: It really has to do with what we're listening to, because we all listen to music together all the time.
Shiva: What we do is...we talk a lot. For the 12", we were talking about the songs every night. "What if we do that?" It was all totally theoretical but it actually came together off that basis. We had already done a lot of the work without even touching instruments because we just listen to music, hang out, whatever...smoking weed, drinking together.

MRR: Would you say that helps you more with arranging the music than writing it? Do you guys all write for Kaleidoscope?
Shiva: Yeah.
Owen: I feel like it's pretty equal. The insurance of living together is that it's all equal as well.
Shiva: A lot of the stuff comes together like that. We write it by talking about it...
Owen: A lot of mouth sounds...I'd say like 80% of writing the songs are mouth sounds. [*makes random mouth sounds, laughs ensue*]
Shiva: We do a lot of that, directing each other...but the last stage is for each of us individually to embellish. Owen comes up with fills, what he plans on the recording will stick. That's a crucial piece of a song. Joe will go purposely off-key, jamming...
Owen: [to Joe] You'll hit the harmonics, the texture of the songs will be based on how you hit the harmonics.
Shiva: I feel like one of the defining moments of us writing together was one time we were practicing and Joe was doing some weird shit and we would stop whenever he'd do that. He yelled at us, he was like, "Don't fucking stop! I'm trying to do something, let it go. Don't pay attention to me." Now it's like, "OK!" You gotta trust it. I write the lyrics but I always talk about what they're gonna be about with Owen and Joe. Like we were just arguing over colors for art yesterday, you know what I mean? Showing each other different blues.
Owen: Yeah we had an argument over the color blue. [*laughs*]
Shiva: It all has to pass through the entire collective.
Owen: ...and my infinite doubt.
Shiva: All of our stupid fucking personalities...Nothing is, "Oh, that's his thing...he does that." It's been developing towards this direction where nothing is allowed to be untouched.
Owen: We're just not casual people.
Shiva: Because of that...it's grossly inconvenient, what we're doing. But it makes sense for us. It makes it count.

MRR: I think that plays into a lot of why I was initially drawn to the Kaleidoscope releases. They're very well thought-out. So you guys produce and engineer everything as well?



Shiva: Yeah. That's a carry-over. We did that by necessity in Deformity 'cause we were in the suburbs. I had a recorder that my father had lying around. We taught ourselves how to use it.
Joe: We all record on our own too. We all like messing around with recording. It's natural that we record everything.
Shiva: I've come around to thinking that punk music, in general, the way I grew up with it, is kinda like "headphones music." I didn't go to school with any of my friends. Joe went to a different school even. To all of us, music is this isolation chamber...this zone that you occupy. It has to be loud and bright and totally infiltrate your mind. It's not the only way you can achieve that, but for us it feels like the only way is to make it yourself.
Owen: I also just don't trust anyone else to do it. It would also be weird to live together and not record ourselves. Joe is a Shop Goodwill fiend. Can you explain that, Joe?
Joe: It's an auction website for Goodwill that has a lot of good music stuff on it.
Owen: Joe accumulates it and fixes it up, then we use it.
Shiva: Production is such an important part of punk.

MRR: So with the new 12", there's a keyboard part on one of the songs. Is that one of you guys?
Shiva: That's Eddie. [Shiva's former bandmate in Ivy.]

REPORT ON PROGRESS AND FUTURE PROJECTIONS

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CAN'T KEEP TRACK OF WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?

TIME KEEP PASSING YOU BY?

STEP TO THE LOOKING GLASS AND DISSOLVE

Owen: Eddie jams with us because he basically lives here.
Shiva: He's gone through stints of living here...just hanging out.
Owen: Eddie was playing keys with us just for fun. We were like, "Oh, should we play live together?" There's always the thought that we could have this ensemble-ish quality to Kaleidoscope. Maybe we have trust issues across the board. [*laughs*] We were like, "Eddie, you should play this amber alert-sounding key part."
Joe: I think he came up with that shit on his own.
Owen: We just let him down there [in the basement] for like three hours by himself. He recorded it and showed us that.
Shiva: There's also a saxophone. We had a friend come in and do that.
Owen: We weren't going to use it, then we accidentally mixed with it. And it was like, "Oh that's sick!"
Shiva: The saxophone sounds like the kid was playing outside, walking by while we were playing the song. We've talked about this ensemble thing...audio-visual crazy shit.
Owen: There was sampling on *Volume 1*. After that Joe was like, "We shouldn't sample straight up." But we had the inclination to continue doing that but do it ourselves. Having things sound like samples, but it's really just us. Like sampling without actually sampling.
Shiva: ...having things that sound like interference...there's something about hip-hop and early drum machine music that is so fucking punk. A regurgitation of the world that you're living in. I think that's the punkest shit.
Owen: ...relating to the sound of being on the street...just walking around. There were a couple samples on the record. We sampled this debt collector who keeps calling me on "Body Bureau." On "Cloud Control" we sampled these short wave radio things...covert cold war spy signals.

MRR: I know you've mentioned that there will be a music video for the 12". How do guys approach visual projects with the band, be it videos, record packaging, flyers, etc.?

Owen: I have access to video editing. I got really into sourcing deep YouTube videos. Like *deep* internet. I just pulled together a bunch of stuff and made this video for "Simulator". We really are trying to say something.

Shiva: I do all of the 2-D visuals. But Joe and Owen are my editors. We bounce ideas, decide exactly how it's going to come together. The *Vol. 2 No. 2* tape sleeve was a concept that Owen had and then I executed it. I care a lot about packaging and I have a lot of ideas for it. But it has to run through this system of consideration...

Owen: It has to go through the crucible of doubt. [*laughs*]

Shiva: Sometimes I feel like punk aesthetics can only go so far. I saw Owen putting together these video compilations and thought it would make so much sense for the visuals to extend to his interpretations of stuff—him using a toolkit that I have no capability with—to push what we're trying to do and say further. People respond to videos. We want it to be a total assault on your senses.

MRR: There will be a lyric booklet with the 12" too, right?

Shiva: We have to account for what we're saying. Maybe people will respond to it or be inspired by it, maybe not. That's secondary...it's more to make it coherent to ourselves.

Owen: I'm too anxious to put out something with things unsaid, things undone.

MRR: How have you guys enjoyed being on tour? Is there anything you've encountered on the road that has challenged or influenced you as a band?

Owen: So we're a three-piece band. We play hard. I can't hear it so well from my position. We make a new setlist every night...always trying to make it interesting like that. People recently have been moving more at the shows, which feels good.

Shiva: Going on tour with this band, for me, has been so rewarding. One major thing is that NYC is an older scene at this point...people don't dance around as much. We're the youngest group in NYC by like five years.

MRR: Yeah! It's been like what...7–8 years since Dawn Humans, Crazy Spirit, Hammerheads all first started?

Shiva: Yeah. Haram are a little younger, closer in age. I'm the oldest in this band and I'm turning 23 this year. There's a lot more kids in other cities. When they're more engaged, that's so rewarding.

Owen: Playing to people our age is the most rewarding. It's been huge for me at least. One of the first shows I went to was the last Deformity show. I just felt so much younger [seeing them].

Joe: The best part about being on the road is seeing different communities. There's more of a sense of community in other places than NYC. NYC can definitely feel alienating.

Owen: We're also isolated in this house. Everyone [else] lives in North Brooklyn.

Shiva: It cuts both ways.

Owen: It's unavoidable.

Joe: It becomes less important on the road. I personally feel like the NYC punk scene is so significantly different from many other, smaller cities.

Shiva: People have to make so much money to live here. Maybe the sense of a show being this crazy experience is not as prioritized [here]. It's stressful to live here, for everyone. Playing to younger-minded people who want to move around, engage with the music when they're seeing it live, and not just stare...we get a lot of blank stares.
Owen: A looooot.
Shiva: Playing guitar and singing is so annoying. You can't confront people. At this point, maybe that's a good thing. So when people are engaged, they're actually engaged.

I feel inspired by kids who live for cheaper but build these elaborate houses. Like D4MT Labs is this elaborate organization we've imagined. I want that to be realized. Like the walls are crawling with shit you're doing, the stuff you're taking in. That's what inspires me about tour the most, the way people immerse themselves in what they're doing. It's tougher to do here because there's not that much space, but we have that now.

MRR: You had a long drive on you last tour, between New Orleans and Charlottesville.
Owen: I think every band should know about this. The Je-Ju Sauna. It's in Duluth, Georgia. We didn't have anything booked in between New Orleans and Charlottesville...not that we fucked up, we just didn't have a show. So we found that the halfway point was this spa...So we show up, tried to find food for an hour in this totally desolate area.
Shiva: ...found this late night pho place. We were with Jonah from Mystic Inane, driving him up to DC for Inauguration Day. We didn't know him that well. We were just hanging out and went to this spa.
Owen: So you walk in...None of us had ever been to a spa. We're like, "Hell yeah!" We go in these saunas and are like, "Is this the spa?" Then we realized, you have to get naked to go in the actual spa. So one-by-one we trickle into this spa. I go in first, then Shiva comes in...like, "Hey man, how you doing?" [*laughs*] So he sits down in the spa. Then I see Andrew, our friend who was also on tour. He's like, "Hey guys..." [*laughs*]
Shiva: ...breaking down the last barriers we had between us.
Owen: Even living together, you're not in a spa! We ended up sitting like ducks in a row, shaving in these squat-like chairs at the same time. Joe goes over and starts shaving, everyone's sitting in these squat chairs with their butts to the ground. Shiva goes over and starts shaving. I'm like, "Oh fuck, I'll go shave." So every one of us is sitting in these mirrors in a row, shaving, butt naked. So we ended up walking away looking really clean. Our skin looked...
Shiva: Radiant.

MRR: I noticed that as soon as I saw you guys. You looked really good for having been on tour for a week.
Owen: It was a good time. I feel asleep watching *Hannity* in a lawn chair.
Shiva: Here's the catch. You can sleep there. $25. The sleeping part is kinda like if your flight got canceled and you're at the airport. They do not turn the lights off.

MRR: So what else do you guys have coming up? Horrible Fest, right?
Owen: We're trying to record more, make more music.
Shiva: Just keep doing the same shit that we're doing.
Owen: It would be awesome to do a really skit-style LP. Something that takes the germ of every volume...the freewheeling, texturally different elements of *Volume 1*...the spaced-out, loop quality of *Vol. 2. No. 2*. To work between different machines that we have, different instruments we have...just build up this weird LP that takes all of those ideas and makes us have to work with the different strands that we have left.
Shiva: Those are the goals. And to make music in other capacities. We're always talking about what our vision of punk is.
Owen: I just wanna see how far this thing goes.
Joe: Yeah.
Owen: My goal, personally, would be to get better. We should practice more. We're pretty close...even better though.
Shiva: I just want to sync into it more, you know? Do whatever it takes to keep it going.

Kaleidoscope has a new 12" out on Feel It. Delve into the D4MT Labs archives at d4mtlabsinc.bandcamp.com.

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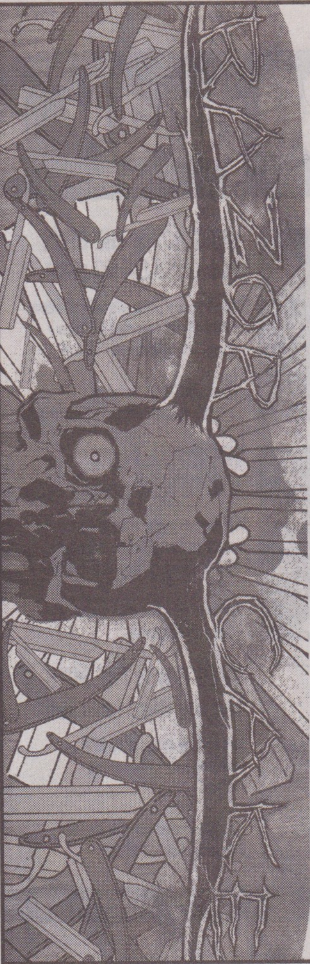

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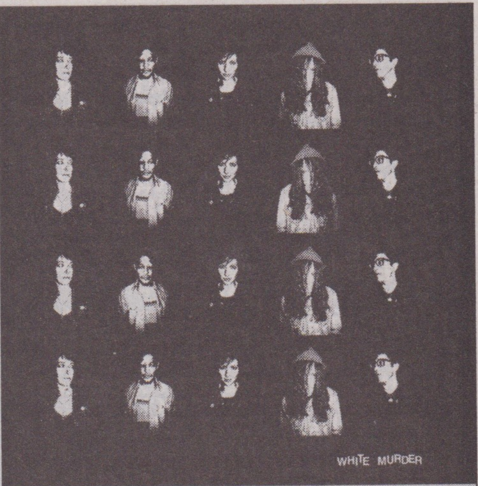

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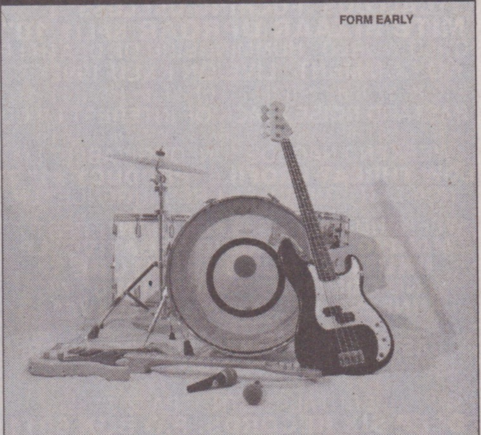

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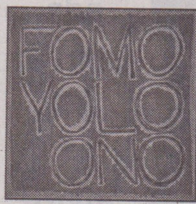
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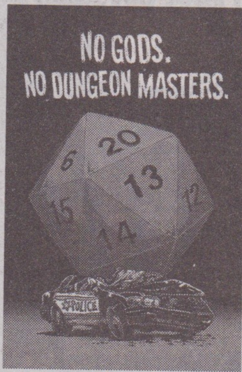
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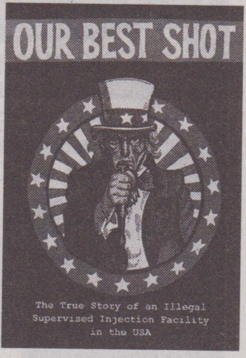
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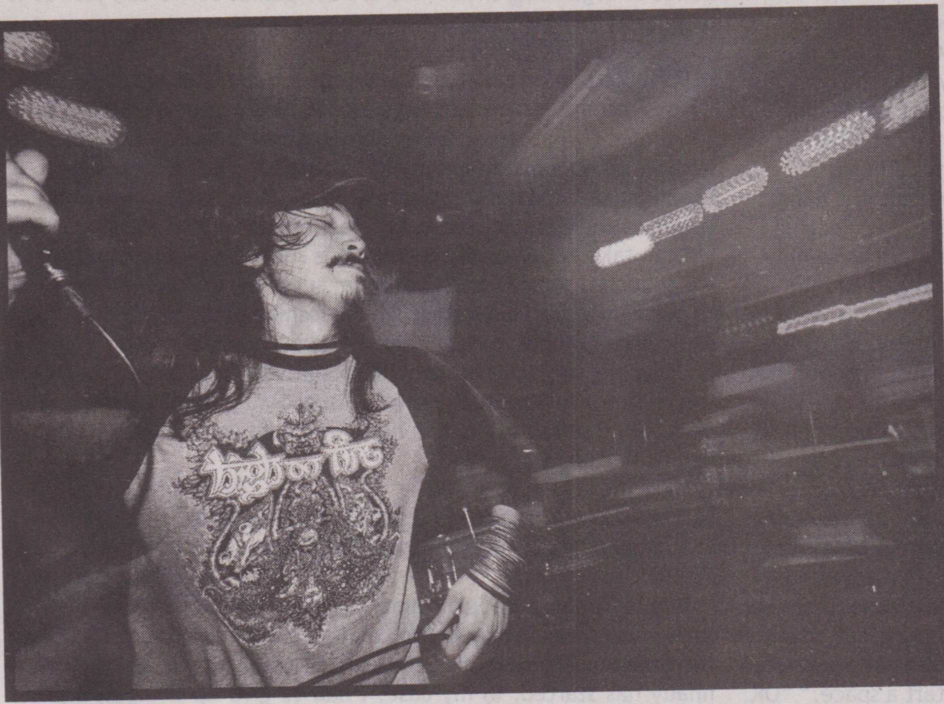


If you live in Japan, you may have seen You Ishizuka, the singer of Fukushima band Band of Accuse, not only at punk shows but at counter-actions against marches by racist scumbags. This time I asked him about punk networks, Fukushima after the disaster in 2011, and antifa action, focusing on the "exploitation of the rural by the urban" in this "democratic country" Japan, which became clear after the disaster and the nuclear plant incident.

Interview and translation by Satoshi Suzuki. This interview was originally printed in a Japanese-language zine called El Zine, issue #21 published in July 2016.

MRR: Let's start off with a typical question. When did Band of Accuse start?

Well, when was that? I think it was around 2008. I started it with Shin (drums) and Hidaka (guitar). I was feeling like starting a new band at that time and I talked to Hidaka about it because he looked bored and has similar taste in music as me. Shin was still a high-school boy and playing drums in a band called Oser. I thought he was a good drummer and I saw he was sleeping on a bench in a park one night when he didn't catch the last train, and I liked it. So I asked him about starting a new band. He is also a drunk punk which I like. [*laughs*]

Hidaka has been on his vacation for long time and has not come back yet, so now Yamada from Strange Factory fills in for the bass guitar and Ryo from Strange Factory or Nobu of Swindles plays the guitar for Hidaka's absence. I have not given up playing with this band.

MRR: I like the name's simpleness, which represents a prime meaning of existence of punk bands. Is there any reason behind it?

I'm always offensive on anything. Even when playing a video game, I don't do any defense. I was stoked on war video games when I was kid, I felt really good if I colonized any lands and exploited all resources from there and made nuclear weapons and conquered the world in the game. [*laughs*] Of course it is a game though. And the reason of the name of the band is, I was just drunk and I felt like it! I thought it's cool, like "Band of Gypsies" of Jimi Hendrix. And I didn't want a stylish name.

MRR: Was there any idea what kind of music you want to play when you started the band?

It was originally D-beat and some crust punk. But now I just want to be a hardcore punk band, including those genres. Other guys in the band like various kinds of music and some of our songs are not like straight hardcore. I want to absorb anything and try new things. I want the band to keep challenging and changing. Like some kind of crossover band. But of course we are basically a punk band who just want to play nothing but punk music.

MRR: You are from Fukushima and organize shows in Fukushima and Koriyama (a city in Fukushima). Tell me some stories about organizing shows there.

People don't show up and there is only a small number of bands, so shows are always with not only hardcore bands but some other kind of bands. But I found it is interesting too, recently. Recently we have played with bands like Rebel One Excalibur, One Stroke, Behind The 8 Ball, Strange Factory, Portrait, The Path, hapt, moz, Orse from Aizu, Sacchan who lives in Iwaki and plays the bass guitar in The Happening. Koriyama is a small city to be a punk but we hang out with anyone no matter who they are, which is great and fun.

MRR: I think there are many NYHC style bands in Fukushima. Do you play shows with them?

Yeah. I had kind of known them before, but after the disaster in 2011, we started working together. There is a rehearsal studio called Tissue Box in Koriyama, run by a member of the band Redd Temple. And guys from Behind the 8 Ball run a bar called Rebuild where we can play shows. They are both post-Fukushima things. They are very important for the scene here now. We can just hang out there and they welcome poor punks like me. [*laughs*] The past Fukushima scene was boring and there were only haughty old punk dudes. But now it has changed and it's more fun. Many bands from other prefectures come here to play and even some overseas bands play here now.

Rural punk scenes don't go well without cooperation between people from different genres and it should not be competition but cooperation. Ideally I want to practice the idea of anarchism in Fukushima.

MRR: Rebuild is a cool place in a cool location, but did they close the bar recently?

Rebuild and Tissue Box are alternative spaces that our friends established after the disaster. Everyone felt that we should start from the beginning since the disaster eliminated everything. It was like, "Well, I'm gonna start a space." "OK, I'll support it!" "I'll start a new band!" Rebuild will be open again in a different place after some break. It is difficult that we lost a space for poor people like us. I hope Rebuild will be our base and playground again and become a trigger for the scene.

MRR: It looks like you also often play shows in Tokyo.

When someone like myself, from a rural area, mentions urban areas, it tends to be a resentment way of thinking, though I learn a lot from the stimulating punk scene there, since there are a number of bands, people, venues and record stores. But at the same time, they might be divided by each music taste or genre and they could be "a frog in a well." If so, it is hard and pitiful.

Once when we organized a show in Koriyama for a band from Tokyo, that band complained to us that "We don't do it this way in Tokyo. We do like this in Tokyo." I wonder if that urban imperialist band has been around or not since then. Well, I don't give shit.

We are influenced by the ideas of the urban, but the rural has its own good aspects and I think bands from the urban area enjoy it when they come to Fukushima. So in this aspect I don't want to think that there is a difference between the urban and the rural. We organize shows for bands in Tokyo, as this city is like shit.

MRR: "The city is like shit." You mean there are no bands, no people there?

I wanted to mean that it is a boring city where depopulation is progressing, so I'm like, "Let's do something fun and interesting." I have no feeling of patriotism though. I have lived in Fukushima and been around here, my friends are there and I'm just doing some stuff with them to make the scene active. Some old ex-punks say that there are no good bands or shows in Fukushima, but well, don't blame others, do it by yourself.

In rural parts like Fukushima, no one would do for you so we just have to do anything by ourselves. It's not only about playing bands or organizing shows. We are DIY punks. So we can just do it or support it.

MRR: You organized a show in solidarity with the Kumamoto earthquakes. Tell me about it.

We thought what we could do something and decided to organize a show to support them. I didn't think it was somebody else's business. As I said before, we have Tissue Box, Rebuild and another venue called Peak Action and these work as kind of a collective so we can take action easily. Everyone is supportive of each other. So we collected some money and relief supplies, and the money went to Hashino-shita Foundation which Yoshiki from Turtle Island and some other people work on, and we gave supplies to Ushiroda Kobo in Tsuyama and they brought it to the site in Kumamoto. I hope this action will eventually lead to supporting homeless people or people with disabilities. And hope we could do stuff like Food Not Bombs in future.

MRR: You think it is not someone's business because you had the Tohoku Earthquake of 2011?

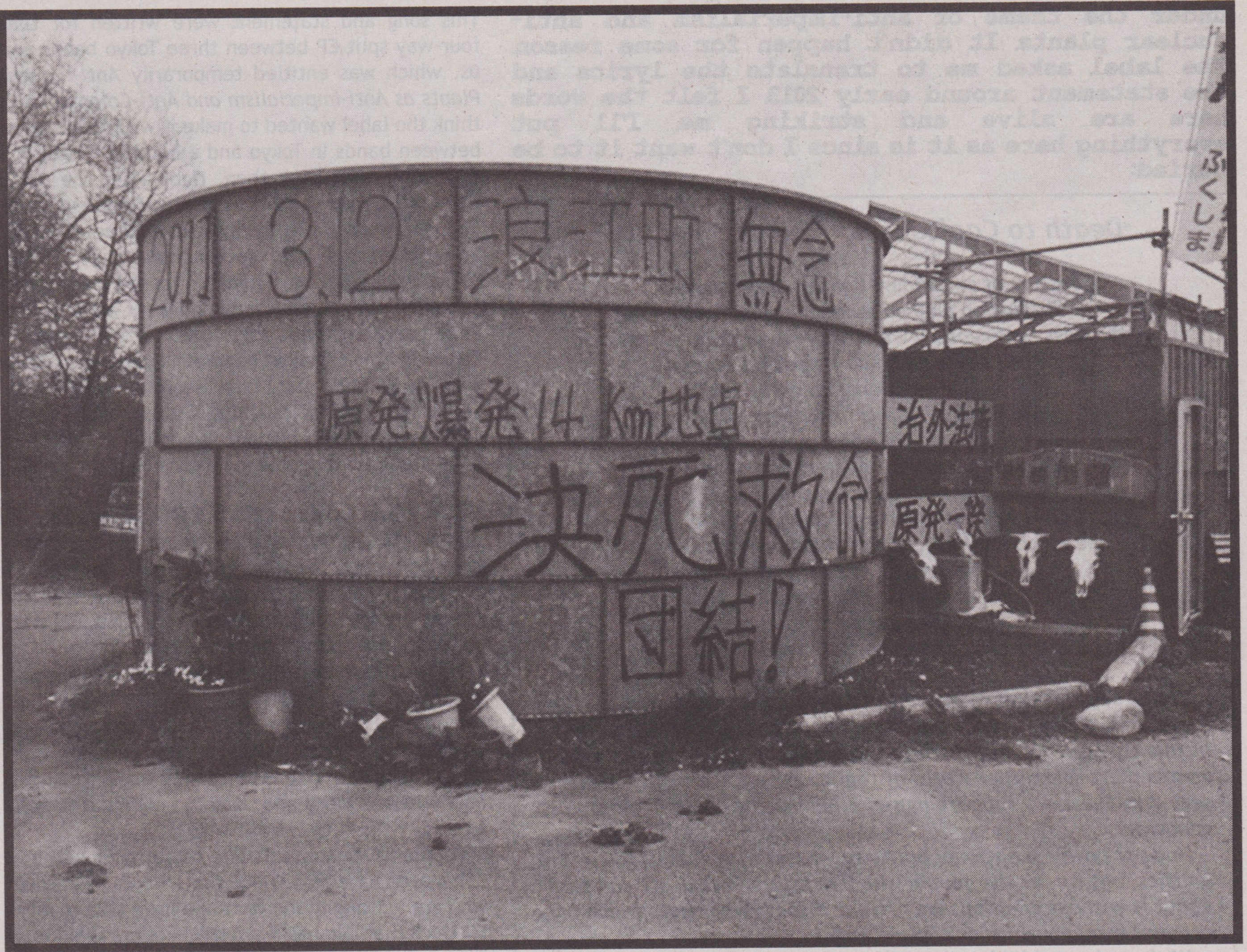
I think all people in Fukushima thought "what can we do?" after the earthquakes in Kumamoto. We had a difficult time in 2011 with the disaster. That was like, the earth is collapsing or a nuclear war finally has started. In my case, I had to give up living in a place where I live, no utilities, no food, so I was moving from place to place. My family had to stay in a car, and there was no gas so we couldn't run away even when the nuclear plants exploded. And no money. Many of my friends lost their jobs. A friend of mine with two kids became mentally ill. Peak Action, our home venue was destroyed. Everyone here has had a hard time so no one would think the earthquakes in Kumamoro are somebody else's affair this time. Punk is love for humanity.

MRR: This time, I felt like, someone would start some relief action in Tokyo so I could just support them.

Like I said, if you are waiting for someone to start something, nothing works in Fukushima, so we have to do it by ourselves. We can't leave anything to others. Government? Administration? Charity organizations? Punk friends? No, you have to do it by yourself.

MRR: In this kind of disaster, what could we do with the network of punks, instead of relying on support from the government?

I don't trust the government from the first place. After 3.11 (the



Kibou no Bokujo (A Ranch of Hope) in Namie-cho, located 14km from the Fkushima reactors.

The owner has been protesting against the government, who are ordering him to give up the ranch and kill 300 cows living there in order to conceal evidence of radiation exposure.

disaster), everyone would think his country will be ruined if we leave anything to the government. We have done some support action in the disaster area in Fukushima with punks in Tokyo. We go to Minamisoma (within a 20km exclusion zone from the reactors) or Okuma (in a 5km exclusion zone) and do physical support to people or rescue abandoned animals there. They would have died if we relied on the government or TEPCO (Tokyo Electric Power Company, the operating company of Fukushima nuclear reactors). We can't afford to sacrifice them because of the accident. This could be some kind of anti-nuke action. We don't trust them so we just do it by ourselves.

MRR: However the punk community is not that big so sometimes you feel frustrated with the support. What do you think of this limitation of the punk community?

I agree that punk community has a limit. In some cases we collaborate with non-punk support organizations, but ideally I want to do it within the punk community. I don't want to set the limitation by myself. We must overcome critical conditions with unity and solidarity. It is not only about the Kumamoto earthquakes this time, but as I mentioned, support homeless people or people with disabilities, even though it's a small, small punk community. We are the socially vulnerable as well. And the punk community is very strong even it is small. I believe in the ties of punk. By the way, in rural parts, connection and community of people are an absolute thing. The earthquake, the tsunami disaster and the nuclear plant accident have destroyed the community and there have been continuous isolated deaths or suicides since then.

MRR: Those continuous isolated deaths or suicides might mean that administration's help doesn't work at all and this could be a problem only overcome by a local grassroots community like punks.

You've talked some about the earthquake and the nuclear plants accident in Fukushima and here I want you to talk about the song "Death to Capitalism." I explain a bit in advance: this song was supposed to be on a compilation EP by Japanese bands

under the theme of anti-imperialism and anti-nuclear plants. It didn't happen for some reason. The label asked me to translate the lyrics and the statement around early 2013. I felt the words here are alive and striking me. I'll put everything here as it is since I don't want it to be buried:

"Death to Capitalism" / BAND OF ACCUSE

System of sacrificing light to the darkness
Radiation exposure under compulsion
For the past half-century we have been sending you wealth
Only sacrifice and discrimination remain
We become weapons, killed by them
Darkness of capitalism never ends
Invade the third world
Nuclear power for nuclear armament
The worst-case scenario
We are the weapons, killed by them
The electricity sent to you dominates this place
Destroyed everything
Spectators, anti-nuclear power only in name
Awake to your own violence
We are the weapons, killed by you

We must say this first of all, nuclear power plants are shit, we hate it, fuck it. Humans made the sun. Since then, is there any peace in this country? Or anywhere in the world? If you think there is, it means there is another world of reality that you don't even try to see. Why must we support murder? Fukushima nuclear plants are genocide.

Nuclear power is national policy so we can't talk about it without politics, but we, as the people who live in Fukushima, we can't talk about it without emotion. We are not disposable robots which only produce human wealth or convenience.

We have been thinking about life and death after the March 11th. Massive fatalities from the earthquake and the tsunami. Many people lost their friends, families, and hope. At the critical moment of life and death, the nuclear plant accident occurred like the final blow. Tens of thousands people were forced to live as evacuese, lost their vitality, and even now suicides and isolated deaths never cease. It means endless death. We wouldn't be able to wipe the tears of anger and sorrow from disaster victims and bereaved families.

This is not a story on TV, nor the past history in a textbook. Not to mention, don't put it in the past like "NO MORE FUKUSHIMA." It is still ongoing and reality. We must say it again.

This is reality.

One woman in the temporary housing said, "Set TEPCO on fire." It also set fire to our heart. This is the warfield. We decided to stay and keep fighting in this place. But our enemy is not only this state or capitalists. Even though Fukushima has shouldered risks of nuclear plants, Kanto area (around Tokyo area) has gained profit from it. It is a matter of course to blame the state or TEPCO. However, do you recognize that nuclear power plants have been fueled by discrimination, and there are people who are sacrificed to them? Before March 11th and after the incident, the poor from not only Fukushima but all of Japan have become radiation-exposed workers. Our life is made up of those sacrifices.

Probably, most of people don't realize that you are also responsible. If you don't, we will fight against you, too. It is you.

This song and statement were written for that four-way split EP between three Tokyo bands and us, which was entitled temporarily *Anti-Nuclear Plants as Anti-Imperialism and Anti-Colonialism.* I think the label wanted to make it with this line-up between bands in Tokyo and a band in Fukushima with intention. Back then, right after the 3.11, there were many anti-nuke protests and everyone including punks were voicing anti-nuke sentiments. They criticized the government and TEPCO. "Take back our Fukushima! No more Fukushima!" Everyone dressed colorfully and went on a protest as if going out with their lovers. "We are with Fukushima, we think of people in Fukushima, unite with Fukushima." But I felt discomfort from those. So I wrote these lyrics and this statement.

I don't explain anymore. I hope you think and understand what people in Fukushima want to tell.

MRR: The words "Set TEPCO on fire" from that evacuee woman in the temporary housing show extreme urgency, which is not usually heard from the "No More Fukushima" movement. How has she been?

Yes, it was real. We went to Minamisoma to support some victims of the disaster. We went round their temporary houses. One day, an old woman named Takahashi told us, "You guys, set TEPCO on fire" and it heavily impacted on me. I understood her only with the word and made up my mind to fight to dissolve TEPCO.

People in Minamisoma and those living within a 20km-area hate TEPCO like that. Words from them who are fighting in the frontline have true reality.

I think that Takahashi-san still lives in a temporary house. She lost her daughter and grandson in the disaster, but she is so cheerful and she gives us power. Though I say self-importantly that I go to support them, I feel like I am supported by them.

MRR: Plainly speaking, what do you think is the violence of city dwellers?

It is not difficult at all—things are imposed on the rural so that the urban can make profits out of it. Okinawa is the same. Export of nuclear plants is the same. Criticizing the state, politicians or electric companies is the thing as a matter of course, but asking yourself is essential at the same time. I don't think things will change by criticism without introspection about power. I just wanted to say that nothing changes without changing yourself. Like even about exporting nuclear plants from Japan, you need self-awareness as a person in Imperial Japan.

MRR: So you want to say that it is our business. In the first place, I always feel hardcore or punk is being an individual.

Right. So I wrote "It is you" in the end of the statement in order to confront individuals.

MRR: When I saw Strange Factory (a band from Fukushima as well) in December of 2012 in Tokyo, their drummer said "I'm sorry to say this kind of things at this kind of place…" before he talked about the situation of Fukushima in their set. And I felt sorry for him. It was like a part of violence of the urban. People who were there, I bet most of them living in Tokyo, unconsciously made him say such thing. It was like the structure of the urban and the rural around nuclear plants issue reflects as it is in a punk show without any sharing of responsibility.

I really understand how he was feeling. I don't usually talk about the disaster or the nuclear plants accident once I'm off the stage at shows. We might feel that we could make people uncomfortable with these topics. I talk a lot if they ask me, but I don't take the initiative. I would feel that I didn't want to appear that I'm playing a victim. But I think it is also important for us to overcome that sense of being victimized.

MRR: If you need to choose people to talk about the nuclear plants stuff in the punk community, it could mean that the community which looks seemingly "healthy" is still superficial and we have not broken something like a "surface layer" lying between others.

Yeah, that means we have not been able to share responsibility. That's why I wrote "Awake to your own violence" because I want people to understand it's a problem of not only the state or TEPCO but also ours. But I think the "atmosphere" just predominates it and individuals are not like this. And we just should eat the atmosphere.

MRR: On another topic, in 2015 SEALDs (Students Emergency Action for Liberal Democracy: a student activist organization which organized protests against the security related bills) or people around it started to say "national movement" and some punks followed them. Personally I was just surprised that punks take sides with "nationals" in that situation. It would mean the end of the world when punks call themselves nationals. Do you have any opinion on this, as you have been involved in it?

I don't deny them completely. They have some I can agree with. I have some friends there too. But it is not acceptable that punks support a "national movement." It is a story on where you stand, but if punks were "nationals," it would not be punk anymore. They accept that there will be people who are excluded as "non-nationals."

I have had some argument with them online. And when I saw a student was oppressed and busted by riot police at a counter action against a hate-demonstration, some people there said "they are far-left so just we don't care." No one should be arrested, whoever they are. I felt anger with the way that they are absolute justice and other clusters are their "enemies." They are sectist. Anyways fuck that national movement campaign. We are punk, we are antifa, we are non-nationals, so what?

MRR: When a label of "nationals" is applied, you want to be with the ones who are alienated. Especially movements since 311 seem to have a "right or left doesn't matter" tendency, and under those circumstances, punks will be the first who get oppressed. But those punks call themselves "nationals" and we must recognize it is a terrifying reality.

Yeah, someday there could be a situation like "they are punks so we don't support them." And I wonder what is "democracy"? How far could punks on the rail of democracy go? To JCP (Japan Communist Party)? I don't support them either. No political party makes a difference.

MRR: Any plans for the future?

I just want to keep myself alive. And punk is necessary to live. So I just want to support the punk scene.

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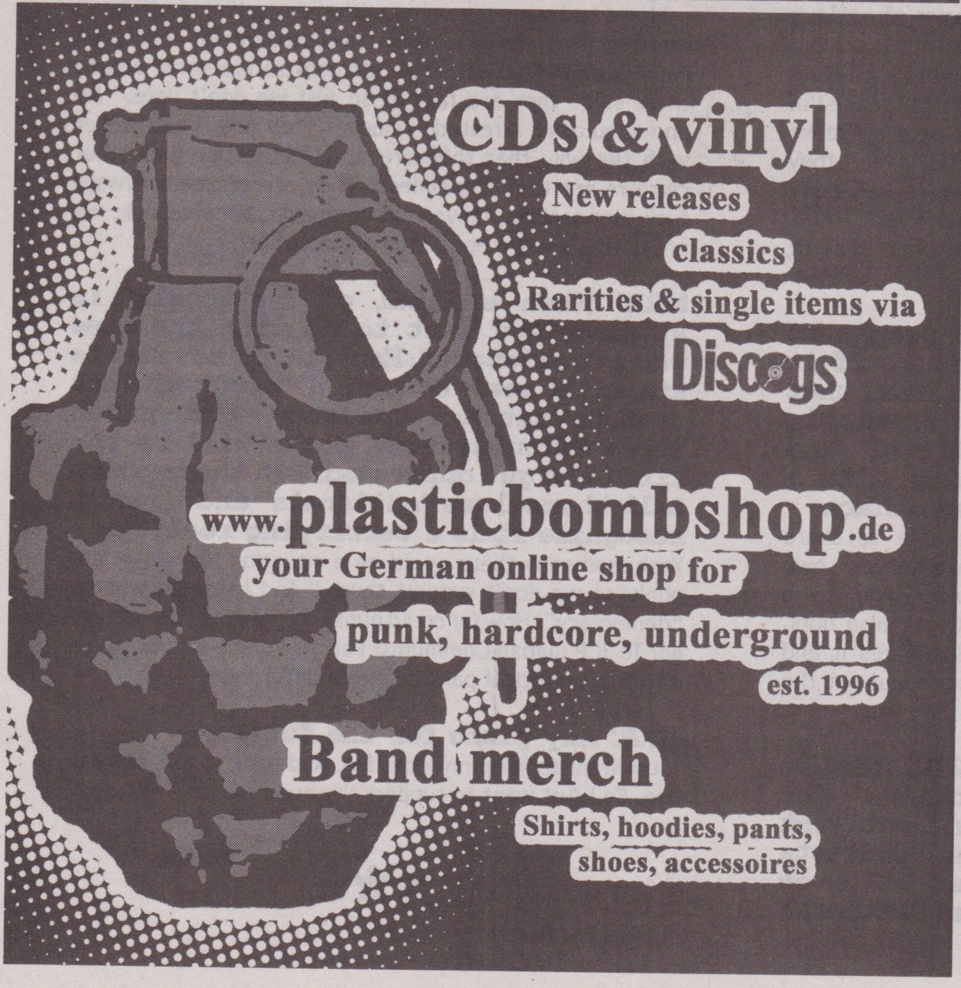

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GAZM

This summer I was asked to drive Gazm on their first tour. They are one of the newer Montreal bands, formed of people who moved to this cold bilingual city from other parts of Canada. The tour was amazing and gave me an excellent chance to get to know these young punks and see what their band is all about. You may have heard about this band and if you haven't you will soon hear about them or their new record Menace to tha Earth. *They play hardcore well like so many bands these days, a good sound that is what you know you love but without being just a throwback or a rip-off of current trends. This band has gotten people in Montreal moving their bodies at shows I haven't seen dancing at in ages and has now been making fans and friends everywhere new they play. I had the pleasure of interviewing them the morning after a huge holiday benefit show put on by the large francophone hardcore scene in Montreal.*

Interview and introduction by Martin Tensions. Photos provided by Imogen Reid, Arina Moiseychenko, and the band.

GAZM is: Bad Bill: Vocals | Sebbe: Guitar | Sienna: Bass | Joshua: Drums

MRR: How did the band start?

Sebbe: Sienna (who I knew from previously living in Toronto) came up to me at a show and asked me if I could write riffs. I was like, hell yeah!

Bad Bill: And then I knew Sienna from living in residence together in our first year. We were the only two punks and we thought that we should totally start a band. We ran into Joshua, who I had been meaning to message, getting food on the street and then brought the idea up to him.

MRR: But what was the pitch? What were the bands you first wanted to sound like?

Bad Bill: I think I just said we wanted to start a hardcore band.

Sienna: There was a long time where we were like "We wanna be weirdos, we wanna sound like Crazy Spirit."

Sebbe: And then I thought it would be funny to take one of these popular, stripped down punk bands and make them go crossover like all the original sort of stripped down '80s hardcore bands did back

in the day. Like every time I talk to Greg or Ryan (from S.H.I.T.), I jokingly ask them when they're going to go crossover. They said they'd never do it, so I had to do it.

MRR: So now that you're post demo and post first EP, what are the bands that you think you sound like?
Sienna: *Not* like Crazy Spirit.
Bad Bill: I think we very quickly departed from that.
Sebbe: Some great contemporary bands that I really like are Red Death and Triage.

MRR: But do you think you sound like those bands? What's the riff soup and the influences?
Sebbe: I would say bands like Cro-Mags. the Accused, Whiplash, Slayer, Metallica. I let the contemporary stuff around me bleed into what I do.
Bad Bill: I have a hard time contextualizing the band.

MRR: Is Gazm a punk band, a hardcore band, or a metal band? Like if it came down to one MP3 tag?
Sienna: I'd say we're definitely a hardcore band.
Bad Bill: Yeah, we're a hardcore band.

MRR: Settled. So who is the eponymous menace to tha earth?
Bad Bill: Gazm.

MRR: So that's what it's about, Gazm is the menace to tha earth?
Bad Bill: Absolutely. So one thing I'm trying to get away from in my lyrics is this idea of being a threat to this fictional "you," but like I don't know who the "you" is most of the time. So (the song) "Menace to tha Earth" was kinda like that where I was going "*I'm a menace to tha earth / I'm a menace to you*" but I changed it to "*We're a menace to tha earth / We're a menace to you.*"

MRR: But what's "Easy 2 See"?
Bad Bill: That song is about people who are dressing like punks, acting like punks, and presenting as punks but doing the same shitty things that everybody else does. I'm not here for that. It's also about people popping in when it's trendy and then popping out once they've exhausted their social resources.
Sebbe: I was talking to Joshua about this earlier but I feel like there are people, like yourself, who came into punk because they wanted to learn different values that are outside of the mainstream but then there are others, who maybe didn't totally fit in with regular society, who come in and try to accomplish what they wanted to in normal society but within punk. They kind of feel like they are able to manipulate and have power over people here.
Bad Bill: I also think that as someone who grew up in a really small city on the east coast of Canada, where there is no hardcore and where you spend years trying to start bands and organizing shows in your parents' garage, it really pisses me off when it gets taken for granted because it's something so important to me, it changed my life.

MRR: Bill and Joshua are both from small towns in New Brunswick, Sebbe and Sienna are from the biggest city in Canada, and then you all moved to Montreal and started the band. What perspectives do you bring from your different origins and how do they work together? Do you feel like you have different perspectives on punk based on where you grew up?
Sebbe: There's always the age old debate about which city, Montreal or Toronto, is "better." It all depends. In Montreal, there's way more support for all kinds of artists and there's cheap rent but then again you have a terrible winter for six months. Toronto has a milder winter but while the city is bigger, the artistic community is less dense. In Toronto, you'll exhaust your options pretty quickly but in Montreal, it just keeps going. You can't even get through all of the anglophone scenes and then on top of that, there are all of the francophone scenes. The punk scene is very good in Toronto, but it's kind of an anomaly. In Montreal, the scene is so multifaceted and there are so many little sections of it.
Bad Bill: I think the whole reason I chose to move to Montreal was because there was nothing in Fredericton. There's no contemporary art, no punk scene, no graffiti, and because of this, there's this part of me that is so proactive about the punk scene here. On the other hand though, it's made me a little bit jaded. Like sometimes when I hear people complaining about the scenes in big cities—and not to say that these scenes don't have very important and valid issues—I'm like, "I didn't even have a scene growing up!" For so many people in these large cities, they just had to go a show and if they liked it, it was a thing they could continue doing. In the smaller places, you need to be the one to start a punk band and get put on shitty bills with bands you don't sound at all like on a weeknight while you're in high school. You need to put on house shows that no one is going to come to because it's the same five bands always playing. All this to say is that moving to Montreal was the best decision I ever made.
Joshua: I feel like New Brunswick has a thriving music scene as a whole, but the punk and hardcore scenes are kind of nonexistent. One of my favorite things about Montreal in comparison to back home is that you're actually going to play with bands that you fit with and with like-minded people. It was sick to get exposure to different scenes when you got put on to a super genre-varied bill but it's also really hard to help your respective scene grow when this happens.
Bad Bill: Yeah, like whenever I was trying to start hardcore bands in New Brunswick, I was always trying to get other teenagers who would maybe like punk to play in punk bands and that's why these bands never really lasted. I'd be trying to get people who really liked garage rock to both play and write riffs in a hardcore band that I was trying to start. I don't want it to sound like it was no fun though—I'd probably do it all over again!
Joshua: I still really appreciate and am thankful for my time playing music in New Brunswick.
Sienna: It makes sense why so many people move to Montreal, it's the closest real big city from New Brunswick and also Toronto so it's a nice breath of fresh air for everyone.

MRR: Do you think that your different perspectives make Gazm? How do they fit together in Gazm?
Sienna: I don't think we really bring that into the band, like maybe deep down we feel certain ways.
Joshua: It's definitely not conscious.
Sienna: It was interesting when we played in a rural spot like Western Mass because it felt so different to me but Bill was like "This is what every show I used to play was like."
Joshua: You really needed to play wherever you could get a space. I remember being sixteen years old and calling community centers and essentially lying about the event you wanted to have because you knew they wouldn't be down with a show.
Bad Bill: And for me, I was even too young at the time to even book shows at real venues.

MRR: You recently played a show with bands from the francophone hardcore scene, which is pretty isolated from the mostly anglophone DIY punk scene. What was that show like for you all?

Sebbe: It was like being on tour in our own city—it felt like we were an out of town band even though we all lived like fifteen minutes from the venue.
Sienna: Yeah it was like what the fuck, we've played this venue before, where have all of these people been hiding?
Bad Bill: There was like three or four people at the front who knew most of the words and like I had never seen these people before. How do you know all of these lyrics? Why are you never at shows that we play if you seem to like us so much? But it was awesome. It was everything that I always wanted to have happen at a set that I'm playing. People moshed when they were supposed to mosh, did some stage moves, and went for a front flip stage dive. It was sick, it was great.
Joshua: I feel like it was all around such a positive thing.
Sebbe: I anticipated no one watching us.

MRR: Why do you think you've never seen these people or bands before?
Sebbe: It's language just like everything in Montreal, it's the two solitudes.
Sienna: Like if you don't have francophone friends inviting you to these shows, then you just never find out about it.
Joshua: I was so stoked when we got asked to play this show because I feel like that's what we needed to get a chance to have the francophone scene exposed to us.
Bad Bill: This is the weird thing to me that I have a hard time wrapping my head around. We're really good friends with some of the people from the francophone Antifa and they've known about us forever. So I'm like how do you all know about us but so many people from the French scene don't?
Sienna: It's because they're connected to you in other ways though, like through university.

MRR: Not to speak badly on that show, but it was the first show that I had been to in a while where your band was the only one that wasn't entirely composed of cis dudes. Can you comment on being in a band that breaks this mold?
Sienna: It was like that for so long, every show there were no non-men in any of the bands.
Sebbe: While there are a lot of bands starting out in Montreal that aren't just composed of white, cis, straight people, I think Toronto is doing better on that. When you look at what's getting noticed, there's way more attention than ever before on bands with diverse lineups, which is so good. There's a certain amount of possible tokenization going on here and there but it's sick that these people are getting positive attention. I sometimes forget about it when I'm on stage, like

in hardcore I lose track of my gender way more.
Sienna: To speak more to punk in general, it's strange how a lot of the compliments I get at shows aren't actually about how I play, even coming from non-men. Recently a girl came up to me after we played and told me how pretty I was and like, thank you and it's so sick that you are here, but yeah it's weird.

MRR: What else would you critique about punk in general?
Bad Bill: Even though the super moshy kind of hardcore is what I'm really into, I never really feel comfortable at these kind of shows because I'm so small. That's why I usually have more fun at punk shows because I can slam and it's very consensual and no one's gonna leave with their arm broken. One of the things about Gazm I'm most stoked about on is that people always say how much fun they have during our sets. I'm not hearing people tell me how uncomfortable they were during our show. That's my mission for Gazm: for anybody to come to our shows and feel comfortable but still go off.
Sebbe: I always feel encouraged when I see other trans people moshing for the first time.
Bad Bill: Like when you see that non-men are not afraid to get in the pit, it's great.
Sebbe: And that they're excited to see a hardcore band. I know people who were jaded about hardcore shows but have told me that because of bands like ours, they realize that do really like hardcore. Hardcore has its stigma because so many people have been hogging it for so long.

MRR: Any critiques about punk in Montreal more specifically?
Bad Bill: It seems like at every DIY show there is always one drunk, old white guy with dreads that is causing a problem and any time somebody calls him on it, there's like ten of his friends backing him up and trying to vouch for him.
Sienna: It seems like it's impossible to get kicked out of a show here. Like when someone like that is making so many people feel uncomfortable, no one will do anything about it.
Sebbe: My standard shit talk goes to the thirty-year-old guys coming out of mosh retirement and just touching everyone.

MRR: These things seem universal and not too specific to Montreal though right?
Sebbe: Yeah, you're right.
Sienna: People making orgasm noises at me because of our band name. That's happened at three shows here in Montreal. Stop it, I hate it, I'm done with that.
Bad Bill: Why did we call our band Gazm?
Sienna: It was a mix of two other band name ideas, Gaz and Spasm.
Bad Bill: I'm so down with the name, but yeah that fucking sucks.

MRR: So what do you think punk needs more of in 2017?
Sebbe: Metal!!
Bad Bill: Less cool guys, more novelty merch, more on-stage shoutouts.

MRR: What do you plan on doing with the new record, *Menace to tha Earth*?
Sebbe: Mostly the regular stuff. Distro it, tour on it, and then make another record.
Joshua: It should be out early 2017. We're putting it out through Byllepest Distro (from Oslo, NO), who also released the vinyl version of Dirty Beach. I'm stoked, it's so sick to be working with someone who is genuinely excited about our music and down to help us make records.
Bad Bill: We want to do a three week US tour next summer but honestly after that, on to the next one. There was a moment this past summer when we were not really jamming, writing, or hanging out that often and I thought that after the tour we just did, we wouldn't really know where to go with the band next but the tour wound up being so sick and now I'm just in it to keep pumping songs out.
Sebbe: Tour was the romantic getaway that we needed.

MRR: So that was the first Gazm tour and for many of you, your first actual tour. What was it like and why did you decide tour?
Sienna: It was like the Gazm advertising tour—the only way that people in the States were going to discover and get down with our band was if we went to their cities.
Bad Bill: It was on my bucket list, I've checked off so many things from it with Gazm. I think it's a really important thing to do as a band but also as a person. To plan something this extensive, to go out and meet so many cool and interesting people all across the map. It was sick, I just want to do it again.

MRR: Two of you are from the east coast of Canada, do you think you will tour there? When a band comes through a small town like where you two are from, it can be inspiring for a lot of punks to start their own projects. Do you feel a desire and obligation to go tour there?
Bad Bill: I 100% feel an obligation to do that but it's hard to say if we'll be able to. It's really important to me that I one day do that with a band that I'm in because I know how important it was for me when I was younger. If I do it, I would want it to be all ages shows as well because on top of not many punk bands touring there, the shows are usually always at bars when they do happen.
Joshua: The thing that just sucks about travelling to the east coast is that it's just so far. To get from here to where I grew up is like a nine-hour drive and you need

to add an hour because you cross time zones. So it's ten hours of driving just to get to your starting point for an east coast tour. It can be worthwhile in a lot of ways though because in some of these cities, your band can just become the biggest thing to these people. Almost every Newfoundlander that I know owns a Hoax shirt because they were one of the only hardcore bands to go there.

MRR: Sebbe moved back to Toronto, which is six hours away, last spring. How has being a long distance band been?

Joshua: One thing that's been so nice is that it gave a reason not to take every show offer. Coming to Montreal, it was the first time in my life where I've found that I was in a band that was maybe playing too much. Don't get me wrong, I love playing shows with this band but it got to the point where we were sometimes playing three times in two weeks and really saturating ourselves. Sebbe moved right around the time where we really needed to start saying no to some things.

Sienna: Now that we only play at most once a month, our friends will try and make and effort to come to our shows.

Bad Bill: The biggest bummer has been that after tour, I was so excited and just wanted to keep steamrolling forward with new songs.

Sienna: New stuff just happens slower now.

Sebbe: Even though there is that distance, I've been in bands before where I lived in the same city and made slower progress.

Joshua: It definitely has forced us to more productive with our time. Tour was also such a good investment. Aside from being able to play shows in all these different places, I feel like it helped us so much in terms of being comfortable with our songs.

Sebbe: We've also all got other bands on the side, so we're still able to practice playing often enough.

MRR: What other bands are you all in?

Bad Bill: I play in a pop punk band called Doggo (with members of Grey Bath / Vile Intent / Crawler / Dreamboat) and Mean, who Sienna also plays in.

Sebbe: I play in Winter '94 with Luciano from the Boys and Lia from Triage / Conman.

Bad Bill: Big shoutout Luciano and to The Boys, one of the bands who does not get enough credit on a larger scale.

Joshua: I also play in Weird Star and Gutless Wonder. Also, stay tuned for Lethal Thought. That's coming.

MRR: And lastly, what's great about the Montreal scene, who would you shoutout?

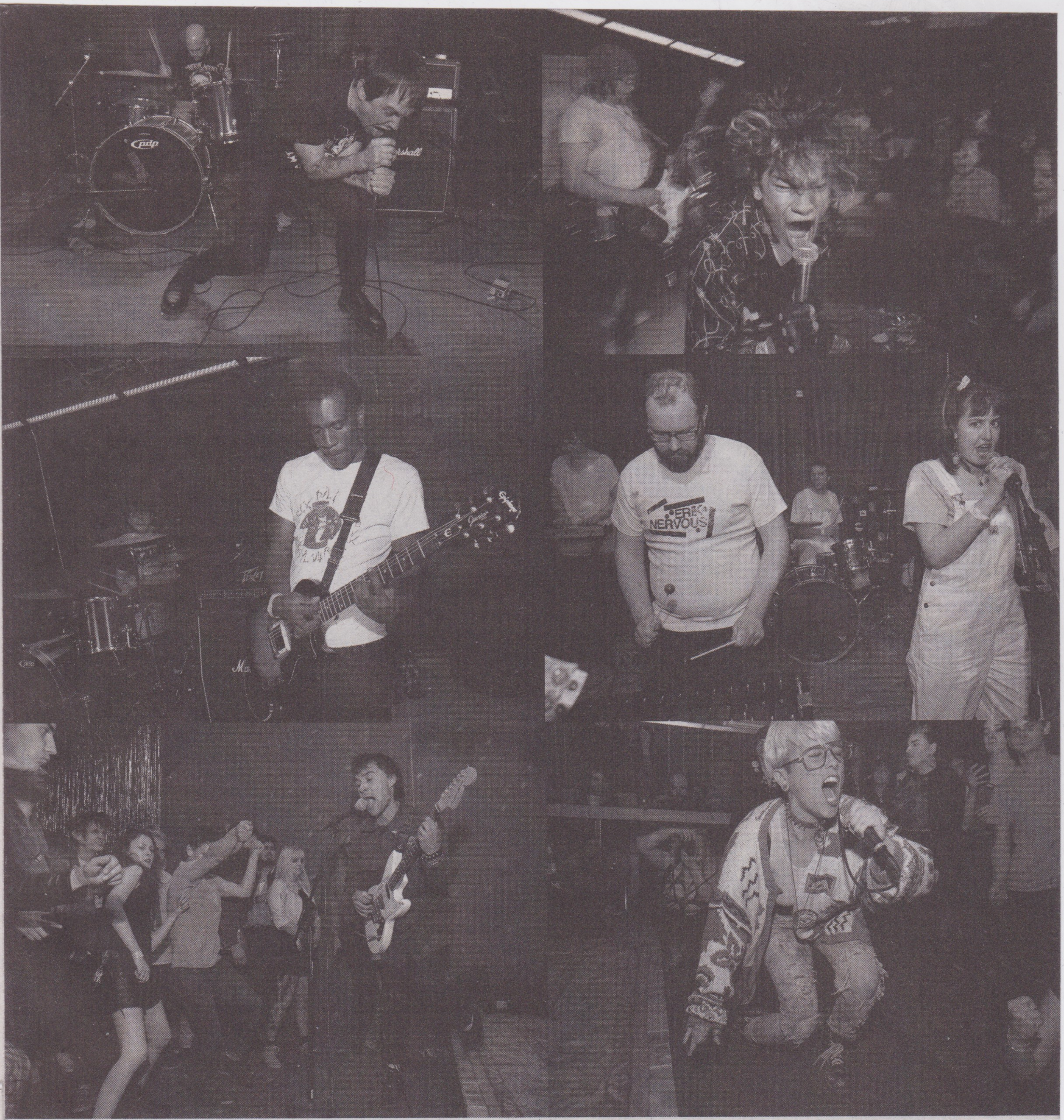
Sebbe: Remwar, Faze, Nuke, Grosser.

Bad Bill: Jacuzzi, Cell, Dan Pelissier, JTA, literally every band here. It's all great, Montreal is doing pretty alright.

The Menace to the Earth *EP is out now on Byllepest Distro.*

Listen at gazmmtl.bandcamp.com.

EVERYTHING IS NOT OK III TOOK PLACE IN OKLAHOMA CITY IN MARCH. PHOTOS BY GARET



FROM L TO R: CONTROL TEST, BIB, STERILE MIND
BUS PUNKS, AUSENCIA, COMMON IGNORANCE, BB EYE
COMMON IGNORANCE, RAZORBUMPS, KID CHROME, O.D.D.

T FISBECK.

FROM L TO R: WITCHTRIAL, FLASHER, ANARQUÍA VERTICAL, DIRTY & HIS FISTS, PROFILE RADIATION RISKS, HARAM, SIAMESE TWINS

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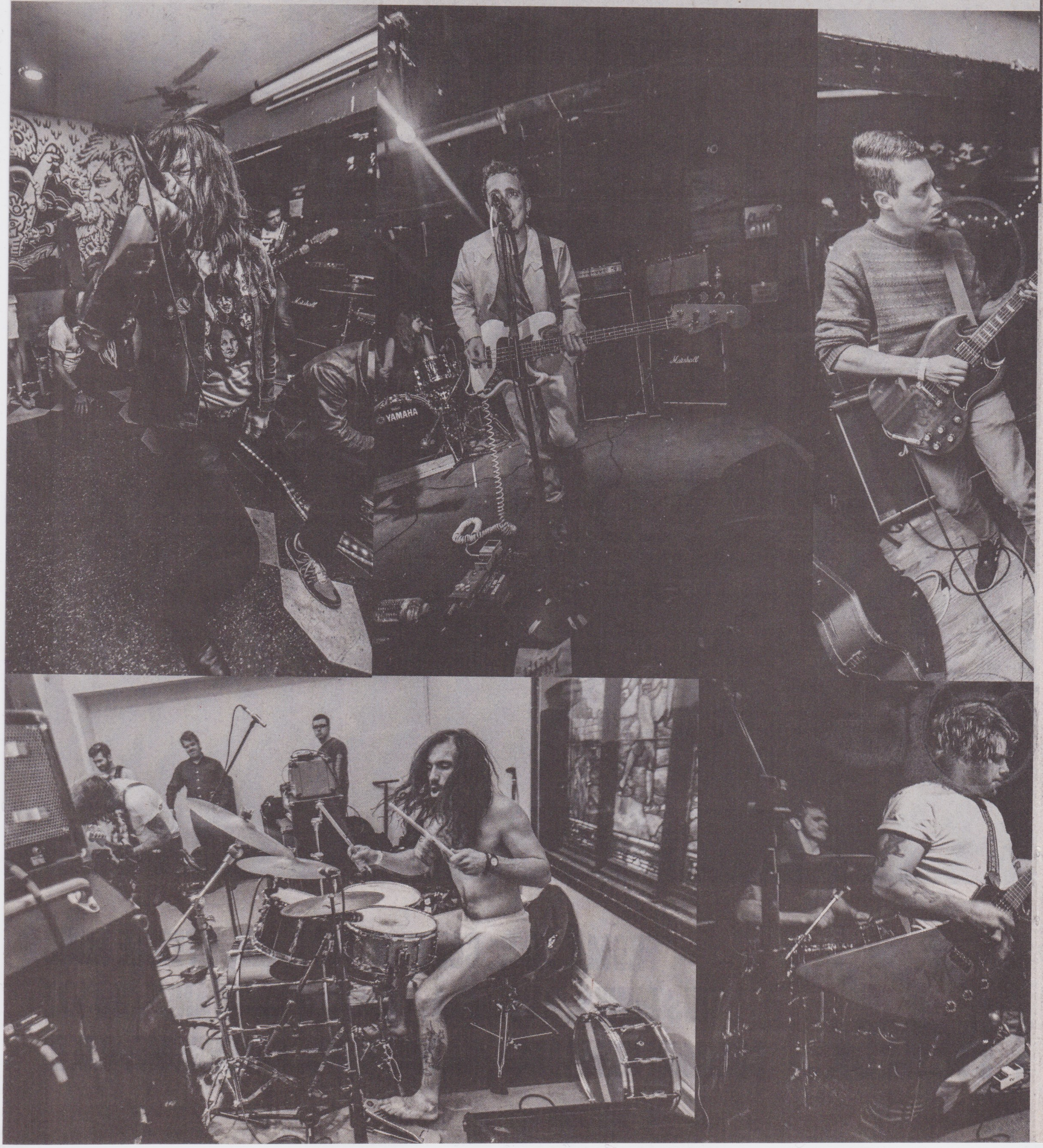
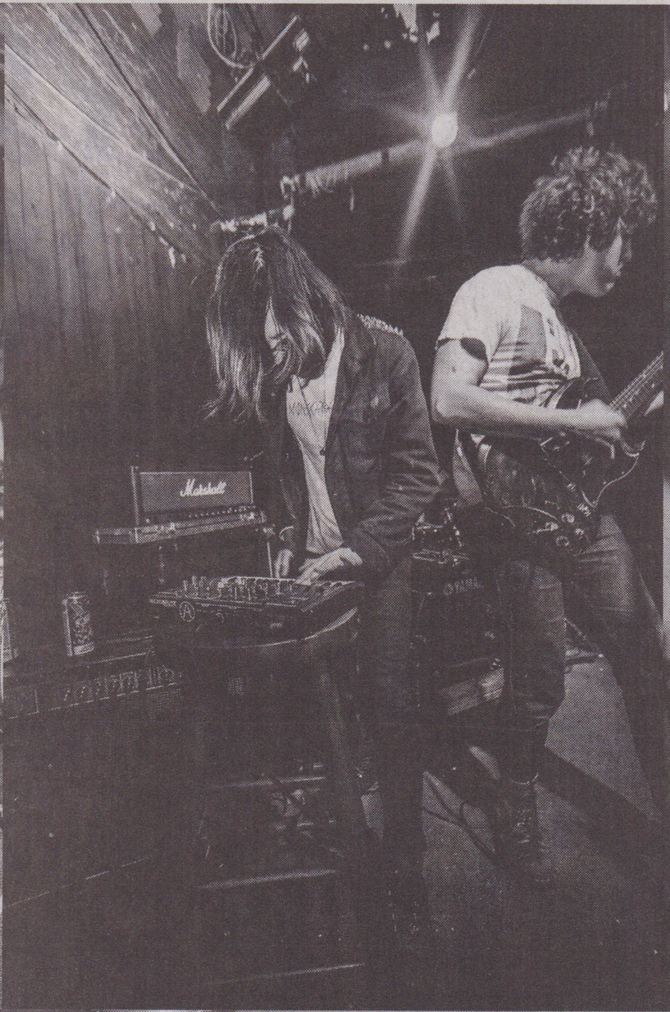


MAGED CITY TOOK PLACE IN WASHINGTON, D.C. IN APRIL. PHOTOS BY FARRAH SKEIKY.



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NACHTHEXEN

Interview by Ben S.
Pictures provided by the band.

MRR: I always find intros describing bands to be pretty cringe, so do you want to do my job for me and talk a bit about yourselves and your background as a band?
Donna: We got together with the aim of making dance music for punks. We all had a similar idea of what we wanted: like '80s vibes with goth undertones. We really wanted Emma to sing for us, cause she's amazing. We managed to persuade her to come along to one practice and it went from there.

Most of us had been in bands, but I was doing a band before with keyboards called Grey Lepers and that got me hooked. I wanted to be in another band with keys, and because I can't play guitar, I thought "what can I offer a band?" I was singing in a different band (the Repossessed) when we formed, but I didn't want to just sing in a band, so I was determined not to be the singer again.
Olga: I've never been in a band before; I was learning drums. I'd only been learning for maybe four months before we started the band.
Fiona: I think we wanted to make something with a different lineup, using different instrumentation to most of the other bands that were around when we started out.

MRR: And you're the first Nachthexen in Sheffield, yeah?
Donna: Shall we mention that, actually? I think we should. It's part of

the formation of the band…

So, when we got together, we decided on the name Nachthexen. We set up a Facebook page and we got a post on the wall from a guy who said "Are you aware that there's already a Nachthexen in Sheffield?"

I think we just said to him "LOL Nick, as if you care that much." I guess coming from the punk community we didn't really take this stuff as seriously as he did.

Olga: I think there are at least another two bands called Nachthexen around the world; it's not a big deal and both bands are pretty different.

Fiona: We liked the name because of the Nachthexen—the Russian female fighter pilots—and that's why we chose it; we kind of connected with it on that basis, so it wasn't really relevant to us whether anyone else had it. Anyway, this guy continues to troll us and pops up every so often to comment on internet threads; if someone tags the wrong Nachthexen in a link he's quick to say "Sorry, there's another Sheffield Nachthexen using our name!"

All: "OUR NAME."

MRR: So, the response to your EP has been really posi…

Olga: The reception has been really overwhelming. It was fun, because a friend recorded our record, and a friend of a friend mastered it, and Kids of the Lughole put it out.

Fiona: We wrote "Drunk Lads" like two practices before we recorded. We just thought "Shit, we haven't got enough songs!"

Donna: We had an incident which sparked the song a few weeks before we wrote it, at Audacious Art Experiment, a Sheffield DIY space. This was Halloween last year, at our demo release. It was a fine example of people not understanding how important it is not to be a dick in a DIY space.

Emma: "Drunk Lads" was written with a few things in mind, the event Donna mentioned but also more generally about some people within the punk scene. I know gigs are social events, but you get some people who turn up, don't pay in, get drunk and treat it like their own personal clubhouse.

MRR: What's coming next from Nachthexen? I've only heard two new tunes written since the 7" played live and I've see-sawed between thinking they're more dancey (generally thinking hi-NRG synth parts here), and they're more punky (drums erring towards the D-beat). Is there a definite direction in your mind?

Olga: We're going to do a musical! …With David Guetta

Donna: I think definitely for me, writing synth lines is usually driven by the dance, rather than the punk. I think that's what makes our sound quite interesting. I think Fi's bass lines are more punk and the synth is quite dancey.

Fiona: Apart from the fact we've got a synth rather than a guitar, it's like a punk lineup but playing dance music, so it's only natural we're going to have the influence of both. We're still aiming to make punks dance

Olga: Even if they don't want to.

Donna: It is difficult to make punks dance; I think they're much more open to dancing in places where we don't know them. In mainland Europe when we were on tour it was great, because people were losing their shit to what we were playing.

Fiona: I think English punks are a lot more reserved.

Olga: Yeah, I think people are more reserved here when it comes to dancing that isn't a mosh pit.

Emma: Maybe there's a set way of punk dancing, which is like bashing into each other and you can't really do that to that to our music, so some people are a bit like "what do I do?"

Donna: In terms of the direction we're headed, I think Olga and I are quite similar in that we'll listen to something and we'll be really into it, and take influence from that. You were listening to lots of disco before we wrote these new songs?

Olga: Yeah, lately I've been listening to lots of Cher (she's mint), the Knife…We all have vast influences: we like disco, we like punk, we like pop punk, we like hardcore, we like Rihanna, and you don't necessarily realize but that all influences what you want to put in your music.

Fiona: As for what's coming next, we're recording for a second 7" in February, so we're hoping to have that out soon. We're also releasing the demo and EP together on a 10"

MRR: Do you want to talk about these changes in the context of the gigs you play now? For example, this interview is for *MRR*, but you've been hyped in the *Quietus* and gigs-wise you started out exclusively playing DIY punk gigs, but lately you've played bigger shows. Do you think that's influenced what you're playing and how you're playing it?

Fiona: It all just seems really funny to me. I find it hard to take seriously. I'm much happier playing DIY spaces, but it's exciting to have a different experience and finding out what these new places are like, without necessarily wanting to go down the road to playing bigger gigs.

Olga: It's fun! Those bigger gigs are making me less afraid of playing live. The couple of times we've played in bigger spaces we're the first or second band on, and it's generally not that full, so having that big, big space just for you is a bit overwhelming. Initially I didn't know how to feel about it, but now I feel more confident when I'm playing smaller gigs…

Donna: We played recently with Sleaford Mods. We decided to play with them cause they're still almost a DIY band; they organize all their own gigs, and their manager puts on smaller DIY gigs in Nottingham as well. I was actually apprehensive about sounding too punk. I think inevitably, our riffs might be very dancey, but at our roots we've still got that anger.

Olga: When we played with them in Coventry, I was surprised by how good the reception was. It made me think that people who don't have access to the kind of music we do, because there's no DIY space in their city or they don't know how to get into those spaces, might listen to this kind of music out of the blue and think "actually I quite like this." Sometimes DIY spaces can be quite "scary" the first time you're there; many of them are members clubs, so you can only get in by being invited by a member, or being a member yourself.

Fiona: That's also a factor in deciding to do some gigs that are outside of the DIY scene or are outside our comfort zone. For me, as well as having a new experience for myself, it's about providing a new experience for people who wouldn't come across this kind of music otherwise…not that we're going to change their lives! Ultimately though, if we play a big gig like that and one person becomes interested in what we do and what we stand for, and looks into these other venues we play with other bands in our scene then that would be awesome.

MRR: Do you want to talk a bit about what else you all do in the scene? Because, as well as this band, you all put on gigs, you create artwork for releases, and other projects.

Emma: I do artwork for flyers and bands, I make zines and put on gigs. It's just amazing to be part of this network of people supporting and inspiring each other. DIY punk is a massive part of my life and I wouldn't want for it not to be there. Within the band, it's nice that everything's been done DIY, like me and Olga do artwork.

Olga: It feels more like it's your baby when everything that's done in the band is done by the band, it feels like there's more love put into it. We all discuss these things together and come up with the designs together and I like that process very much; like how cooperative most of the decisions are. I think we're all on a very similar page most of the time…even when we're not we're good at compromising.

Fiona: We're friends first and a band second. Not that the band's not important, but we were friends before we were a band, and that's really evident in how we relate to each other. I have less time to put gigs on nowadays, but I work for women's charities which for me share the DIY ethos and I guess I see the two as pretty linked for me.

Donna: Similarly to Emma, I put on gigs, which support other girls, and I've played in bands previously. DIY punk's really

important to me, and my life would be pretty shitty without it.

MRR: Without trying to be mega tokenistic, is it important not leaving playing and organizing of gigs to men?

Donna: We are quite conscious about not letting the scene be dominated too much by white men.

We do get quite frustrated—and it's not even done consciously—but people do put on gigs in our community who don't back bands with anyone other than white men playing in them. We would like for the community to be more diverse, and you can slowly chip away at that, but it's hard for people to be open to change.

Fiona: In 2011 I was involved with LaDIYfest in Sheffield. I'm not involved anymore, but that had a real focus on putting on events where all the bands had to have women in, and it was very women-centric and everything was run by women. From that, there have been a lot more gigs and a lot more women playing in bands; it was through that that I got to know Ben [interviewer] and started playing in our old band. There's been a lot more women playing in bands and putting gigs on since then.

Olga: There are more women and queer people organizing gigs across the UK. I can see that, and it's been a real posi change. For example the hardcore scene is still very male-dominated, but it's slowly becoming better. People are a bit more aware, and it's important to give a platform to people who wouldn't have it otherwise.

MRR: So this is an important factor in your songs as well? Where do they fall on the personal-political spectrum?

Emma: They're a mix of both. I only feel comfortable writing about stuff that is quite personal to me. It just feels most honest and I think I'd be pretty terrible at trying to preach. I write a lot about anxiety, which has been really good for me. Singing in a band is mint; it's something I never thought I would dare to do, so it's felt really powerful to do it, and have other people connect with the stuff talked about songs.

MRR: Do you wanna talk about other bands with a similar set up? Since you've been playing it seems like there have been a lot of bands coming through with a similar lineup, but not necessarily a similar sound; bands like Es and Tough Tits spring to mind. Is this part of a wider new branch of punk or DIY music?

Donna: I really think it is. The synth is here to stay, and I'm glad it's back in the heartland of Sheffield. I do think it's making a comeback, and I think it's because they're really empowering, cause synths are really easy to play. Guitars aren't. So, for a lot of people who want to be in bands, synths are great because you can make a really cool sound really easily out of them, and you don't have to learn how to play guitar.

Olga: We have a joke in the band that there's a certain demographic that come to see our shows and like us. It's normally, younger women under 20, and men over 40.

Fiona: It's a huge compliment to see someone who maybe wouldn't generally be at that gig and they've come to see us, or who was there when synths first appeared in bands and will have some really good points of reference.

MRR: Talking to an international audience, what's Sheffield like right now?

Olga: Pretty good actually.

Fiona: There's a lot going on. Until recently we had three DIY spaces, and the only reason one of them's gone is because of regeneration in the city fucking them over. There were three really active spaces before that and there are a lot of really good bands coming out of Sheffield.

Donna: I think for quite a small city, it's a really inspirational place to be. People here are getting more and more confident to be in bands.

Olga: I'd never had the confidence or opportunity to play before now. Sheffield is quite open to letting you try things. There are these DIY spaces, where there's a drum kit available for example, and you can go down and play, or someone can teach you. I think that's a core part of the DIY—people helping each other to start bands and have fun. Rainbows. Unicorns.

Fiona: I think as a city it's got the perfect balance, in that it's small enough to be empowering, but big enough to be really active as well, to have a really proactive scene.

Donna: There are some really amazing bands coming out of Sheffield, like Community and Sievehead; bands who you're proud to know personally, but also really excited to see how well they're doing, and that they're coming out with some great music that people all over the world are enjoying.

Emma: It's nice that it's quite varied as well. It doesn't feel like you have to play a certain type of music for people to like it. Maybe at one point it was a bit more focused on one thing, whereas now gigs can be more mixed and people will still be into everything.

Fiona: There's more of a case of scenes overlapping now, too. It doesn't feel like there's quite the separation that there was before.

MRR: Cheap follow up to that point... to what extent do you think that this burgeoning music scene is in response to the political horror that we're living through?

Donna: Although I'd like to think it is, I don't think so unfortunately. I feel like even though this scene in Sheffield is incredible, and within itself because it's DIY it's very political, I feel like a lot of bands in Sheffield don't actually put politics as a focus in their music.

Donna: Yeah, maybe there is a backlash though. Remember that gig we played that was on the day of Brexit? What did it say on the wall?

Fiona: "Hard times call for furious dancing."

Emma: Maybe it's becoming even more important to people, providing a place where you can connect with people and vent and feel like there is something nice going on as well.

Olga: Like a refuge.

Fiona: There is definitely a sense of community in the scene, whereas it feels like in the rest of the world that idea of community and looking after each other has completely gone.

Donna: And actually the rise in queer organization in Sheffield as well, would suggest that there is more of a political movement going on within the scene too.

Fiona: It seems almost as well, because there's been debate around the implementation of safer spaces policies, some people in the punk scene have moved more towards political correctness and for others there's almost an anti-political correctness kick back, creating a bit more division.

Donna: There's definitely two movements within punk; I don't think they're distinct from each other at all, but there are people who are more into left-wing politics, and people who are more apathetic.

Fiona: People who have felt marginalized are maybe getting a bit louder and a bit more empowered which is a great thing,

but it's causing some resistance from people who might be less affected by what those people are asking for. People who don't feel unsafe at any gig, for example, but might feel threatened by having to question themselves a bit.
Olga: Also—I don't wanna sound patronizing—I think for some people from the old school punk scene, it's the first time that they're becoming aware of what transphobia is, or biphobia, what language is correct to use, and some people have been more resistant, and for some, they've never come across this situation before and they're just learning.
Donna: One of my concerns—cause we've had some discussions in some of our spaces here in Sheffield about how to address gender and other issues—is that for people who never heard about these issues it can be tricky. Just because you've got a university education, or have been educated in this, that or the other doesn't make you any better than someone who just hasn't come across these debates before. I was quite concerned that people could think this is an elitist thing, but I don't think it's come across like that anymore.
Olga: I don't think it's elitist, it's having self-awareness, and empathy and wanting to respect other people who share a space with you and how safe you want to make that space for them.

MRR: Do you want to talk about summer tour and "how it's different on the mainland?"
Fiona: You get more hospitality on the mainland. There's more public funding for gigs, so we were guaranteed 150 Euros for almost every gig we played which when the drives were long was just a relief to know we definitely had our petrol and van hire covered.
Olga: In Germany, but not everywhere.
Donna: Well, we were really well looked after. It's quite amazing, compared to the UK. I thought we looked after people well in the UK, but mainland Europe is so generous and hospitable.
Fiona: A few nights people slept on their kitchen floors so that we could have beds, or got up and cooked breakfast before work.
Olga: I know! I have bands staying over at my place, but I've never thought about giving my bed up for bands, and it made me think that I have to improve my hospitality; like making breakfasts, cause some of the spreads we had in places we played were incredible.
Fiona: In Krakow our hosts slept under a desk in a spare room, cause they had this tiny two bed flat and there were two bands staying, so they gave up their bed and their living room, then got up at five in the morning and prepared breakfast.
Donna: Just the loveliest people.
I think the response people had to us when we were playing was also something unexpected. We didn't expect people to be so into us; we're used to playing shows in the UK where folks don't dance—joking, sorry—but it was a really nice refreshing change for us.
Fiona: We didn't know what to expect, 'cause we didn't know whether people would have ever heard our music before
In Budapest we went on after a really bro-y hardcore band, who were one of the most popular bands there, so we were shitting it when we went on, thinking "people are going to hate us…"
Olga: And it was one of the best gigs ever. And we had goulash!
Fiona: People came up on stage, it was wild!

MRR: Going back to the goulash, I remember Emma's *Fuck it Up* zine, from an Aurochs weekender about band food we had, and what we did in between gigs, which was amazing fun to read…
Donna: We did have amazing food didn't we.
Olga: The goulash.
Fiona: The goulash and Zorro, in Leipzig. A whole big bar covered in food.
Olga: The pierogi in Warsaw.
Donna: I think the breakfasts were the best.
Olga: With pestos and guacamole and all that.
Fiona: And the tomato butter! One place, we had a giant cereal bowl full of this thing that looked like pate. We asked what it was, and the guy said 'cashew and tomato butter', we were like 'great' and put really thick layers of it on bread and it turned out to be a block of [vegan] butter with tomato puree and some cashews in. It was delicious, but my heart ground to a halt when I realised how much fat I was eating.
Donna: We also managed to fit in vegan donner kebabs and currywurst. It was great to see members of Snob crying hot, spicy tears.
Fiona: I guess on tour you don't get to see much of the city you're in, but if you can find something on Happy Cow, you can put it in the satnav and do a gastro tour…
Donna: In Berlin, we had maple bacon donuts.

MRR: And now…do you think Brexit's going to fuck all that?
Olga: I don't know. I feel a bit sad about that situation.
Donna: I think it's going to be really hard for us to tour so easily. I don't know whether we're going to have to pay for visas…we don't know what the situation is going to be, but it's not going to be as simple as getting in a van and playing gigs.
Fiona: We already missed our first gig cause of stupid shit with border control.
Donna: So Brexit basically is a really dark cloud over the UK at the moment. The rise in hate crime and racism, and basically fascism, is really upsetting.
Olga: It's happening everywhere, like Trump in the States, Columbia denying peace with FARC and the rise of LePen in France, and the far right in Spain.
It's all really worrying, but I think we live in a bit of a bubble. The people surrounding us are trying to make the world better, but once you step out of that bubble you realize there are a lot of shit people. In terms of radicalization, and the rise of fascism in recent years, the fear of immigration and the fear over jobs; capitalism is wrecking the job situation and politicians are blaming it on people who've come from other countries. People are really afraid and angry.
Donna: It's been politicians, but also the right-wing media as well. I think it's a real shame that people can't just think for one second, and question themselves, think "why am I blaming immigration" when everyone's slaves to the same shitty system.
Olga: Why do you think that person's moving to your country? Cause the situation in their country's even worse.
Fiona: I found it really sobering on tour, driving past the jungle; it wasn't long after it had been bulldozed. I work with asylum seekers who've been trafficked, and realizing that I was super excited to be going off for a couple of weeks and switching my brain off from work, and suddenly driving past this place and realizing I've got the choice to put that aside, and what a luxury that is. Obvious, I know, but it really hammered it home.
Donna: I work as a teacher in a pretty working class part of the country, where a lot of the kids have got pretty right-wing views, cause they're regurgitating what their parents think. There's a

big Polish community in that area and the division between the kids in that school is shocking and quite scary. But, it's nice to see that some students change their mind over time.

Olga: I'm still a bit pessimistic about the whole situation, about Brexit cause we don't know what's going to happen. And as an immigrant—I'm a white woman, I could probably pass as British, even though my accent is a little different—but since Brexit I've been "called out about it" and had people treat me differently. If I'm living that as a white woman, I can't think about the hell some people are going through.

MRR: Go on then, let's have a bit of a pos question. Can you walk us through dressing up and after-gig discos? They're both kind of hallmarks of Nachthexen gigs.

Olga: Do we always dress up?

Donna: We do, yeah. We do love a good costume.

Fiona: I feel a lot braver when I'm in costume. It's easier to inhabit a stage persona and not feel quite as afraid if you've got a costume to hide behind.

Donna: I totally agree. We do like to dress up as well I think, like Halloween we all dressed up like the girls from *The Crucible*. We've also got Nachthexen flight suits as well.

The discos after are also pretty important for us. Olga and I do a lot of DJing and we all love a dance.

Fiona: It's been a thing in the past few years where, after DIY gigs, people want to have a disco. You know, we've got this space that has no curfew and everyone wants to party a bit afterwards. Why pay to go to a club? Or have to go home, or to a pub with shit music that we don't want to listen to? That extends the DIY ethic a bit further.

Olga: Totally. I think people are less self-conscious about their guilty music pleasures. Like there are many people who like Donna Summer, but are also into hardcore, and after a hardcore gig if you put "I Feel Love," they love it. Or "Candle in the Wind."

MRR: "Candle in the Wind" has backfired on me though. That used to be my end of the night floor clearer, but now people just slow dance to it.

Olga: Yeah, it's like "Come on, don't be so tough. I know you like Prince."

Fiona: I think people have reached that stage where they're comfortable enough to say "I like pop music, and I'm still punk." I've been in punk long enough that I don't have anything to prove anymore, I just want to have a dance.

Emma: It's like we said before, it's a safer space to listen to that music. There are probably lots of clubs in Sheffield where I'd like the music they play, but I'd feel really uncomfortable going there, and you'd probably get some pretty sleazy people.

One of our new songs is called "Disco Creep" and it's kind of about that. Hopefully at a DIY disco you might get a few less disco creeps.

Olga: I think in a mainstream disco you'd feel less powerful to say to that person "don't touch me," but in a DIY space you have everybody else.

Emma: Yeah, everyone would have your back

Donna: Ha! This is quite funny, but can we just go round and name our number one party banger?

MRR: That was the next question. I swear!

Fiona: Can I have two? Just to be difficult: Will Smith – "Miami" and Kevin Lyttle – "Turn Me On."

Olga: "How Will I Know" by Whitney Houston.

Fiona: Darude – "Sandstorm."

Olga: Darude. "Sandstorm."

Fiona: Who knew this would be the hardest question to answer?

Emma: Len – "Steal my Sunshine" is one where I will literally just bounce up and down for the whole song and then be really out of breath.

Donna: Shit, I've got mine. Sonique – "Feels So Good."

All: Ooohh

Emma: Oh yeah.

Olga: Such a banger.

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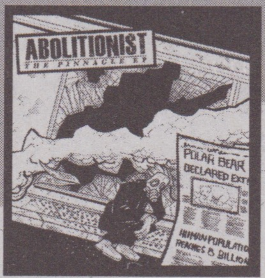

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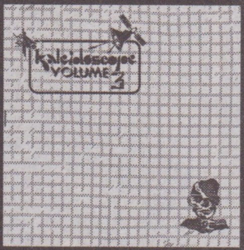

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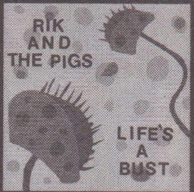

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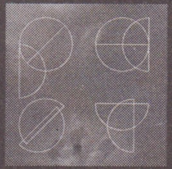

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MRR spoke with Protex's Aidan Murtagh about the band's origins and reformation.

Interview by Eddie Kenrick and Seán Goucher.

MRR: What kind of music would there have been in your house growing up? What were you listening to as a kid before punk came about?

Aidan: Well, I was born in the early '60s and I do remember lying under the old gramophone because the speaker was in the bottom in my parent's gramophone, and I do remember the Beatles, and I remember the 45 with the colored cover, the red cover, it might've been "Please Please Me" or something like that. It's probably worth a fortune now! I have a real strong memory of that.

My Dad was into Herb Alpert and Kenny Ball and that trad jazz stuff. So that's my very, very early memories. My eldest brother was very much into music. In the very early 70s he would've been into *Transformer, Aladdin Sane* all that sort of stuff, and also stuff like Eric Clapton, the Stones. My brother also played acoustic guitar. I think that's where the interest came from. In fact, I know it is. And my mother played piano.

MRR: What was the first music that you considered to be "your music"? What was the first stuff you sought out yourself?

The very first single I bought I think was "Cum on Feel the Noize" by Slade, but that would've been fairly far on, mid '70s I think. I was really into listening to music from '70–'75 but I don't think I actually bought something 'til that. But then I started! It was 40p or 50p at the time.

DON'T RING ME UP

PROTEX

MRR: Were you playing music at all before Protex?
I was playing music before Protex, yeah, about 13 years old maybe. There was a gap of a few years before Protex and before punk. We were very young, we were playing Thin Lizzy sort of stuff, Dr. Feelgood, of course—we were almost a tribute band to Dr. Feelgood! We just loved them. We were playing youth clubs, playing schools, it was our goal to do that. I wasn't really into football, I was into music.

MRR: Do you remember what your first electric guitar was?
My very first guitar was with Protex, it was a copy of a Gibson SG, it was bought in a market or something like that.

MRR: And when it came to singing, did you know you wanted to be the singer?
No, I was accidentally the singer, like a load of people in bands I think, nobody in bands wanted to sing, I just kinda had the burning energy to do something you know. It was me and Owen, who became the Protex drummer, it was always us who played together in these bands before Protex.

MRR: Were you in school together?
No, we were on opposite sides of the divide, different schools, so that was interesting too, in the Troubles time. I had just moved from the West of the city where all the heavy-duty stuff was happening. I was still going to school there 'til I was eighteen. But I moved into the South, there was still trouble, there was a bomb in the house opposite us, but it was a more affluent area.

I met Owen when I moved over to that area of town, just in a football match in the street.

MRR: How did the first line-up of Protex come together?
We were in this band, at that time it was all covers, just before the punk thing. I don't know how it split up but it came to an end, and I said to Owen "Oh, you know this punk thing?" We both wanted to play this sort of music—you could actually have a stab at playing your own stuff! I didn't really know any other musicians at the time, but he knew David and Paul, who played in Protex, but Paul couldn't play anything, he couldn't sing or nothing, but in those days it didn't matter. "You be the bass player, here's the bass." [We would have been] sixteen or seventeen years old.

MRR: Whose forgiving parents would let you rehearse and have the drumkit?
It was mostly Owen's, and mine from time to time. He lived on the next street over to me—he had a cool bedroom in the attic. His parents were very tolerant, it was always a good jamming session when we were kids.

MRR: Do you remember when you first became aware of punk in Belfast?
I remember a friend talking about the Sex Pistols, '76 it must've been. "Anarchy in the UK" had just come out, and for me what stuck out was the guitar sound. I remember saying to the guy "That's just like heavy metal!", but then there was the lyrics and the attitude.

MRR: Do you remember the first bands in Belfast playing that style?
The first local band I would've seen would've been Rudi. I think probably that first Clash gig that's always written about—when we all went to that everyone realized there was a big scene.

MRR: And that's the gig where they didn't get to play and there was a riot, right? Do you have any specific memories of that night?
Oh yes, I was about third in the queue at the Ulster Hall, there was a big line, I remember the police, I remember the riot. I remember spending the rest of the evening with the Clash. That was just mindblowing. I'll always remember Joe Strummer saying "Just continue playing" you know and that stuck with me.

MRR: As things developed with the band and you started playing more gigs, before Good Vibrations, was that a goal for you, to get a label and do a record?
Well it was but we didn't think it was possible, just one of those things that you aspire to. It started to become more doable after that second gig that Protex had, with Rudi in the Glenmachan Hotel. John Davis was there with the camera and that was the footage from *Shellshock Rock*, "Strange Obsessions." I actually watched it two weeks ago, I couldn't watch it for years because I thought it was rough but I actually enjoyed it! Our first gig with the original Protex lineup was in a youth club in East Belfast, Knock Methodist Church, that Dave belonged to—I don't know whether or not he went. It was the second gig that Terri Hooley had told us to go along to. Owen went to school in the center of town and Terri's shop was there on Great Victoria Street, so he said to Owen "Come along, bring your band along" so that's how we started. After the gig Terri asked if we'd record a song so then we were up and running.

MRR: And what was the feeling at home when the band started taking off? Were you still in school?
We were still in school and A levels were coming up, O levels had been, so yeah there was a wee bit of pressure but at the same time I think my parents were glad we had interest and weren't on the streets! But yeah there was a big educational thing in our house—"Do your homework!"—but of course that went out the window for me. [*laughs*] It shouldn't've have but it did.

MRR: Would the gigging have been restricted to the weekend then?
Yeah, gigs would've been. We would've played the Harp Bar, a Friday or Saturday, we would've been really regular there when it started off with Terri, I think more regular than we are ever given credit for now. We were there right there at the beginning and nearly every weekend. And then I remember going up to Portrush—there was a place called the Arcadia Ballroom, we played with a band called Radio Stars, I remember going down to Dublin on a few occasions, we played the Dark Space with U2 and Berlin. That would've been very early '78. There was a few bands came down; us, Rudi and maybe the Outcasts. Public Image were supposed to play but didn't, John Peel arrived down with Terri.

MRR: And had your reputation preceded you?
No, not really, but I suppose we were a band from the North or whatever, and we were grouped in with this stable from Good Vibrations. There was a change happening musically, it wasn't just Van Morrison and the Maritime Hotel, you know the generation before us.

MRR: And when then did it progress from Good Vibrations to Polydor?
How it all strengthened then, well, the Undertones of course, who we played with numerous times in the Harp Bar. Their first gig outside their hometown was in the Harp Bar and we were lucky enough to be the first band on, and John, their guitarist, his guitar didn't work so I lent him my SG copy, great memory for me! So the Undertones were getting going, they soon signed to Sire, Terri Hooley was going around England with his tapes, the spotlight was coming on Belfast. "It's Belfast's turn!" There was interest in Protex, we did a John Peel session, a Kid Jensen session, Terri took us over on the train and the

boat. We were very young then, seventeen. It was winter, and we went down to Maida Vale and recorded a session. The session was played on both Kid Jensen and John Peel, more so John Peel. So there was interest then, that sparked the A&R interest, it was also backed up by the whole trendy thing of punk in Belfast. That would've been maybe January / February 1978 I think. A few companies came over to us, I think CBS came, but the people who expressed the interest and put my radar up were Polydor, because Slade were on Polydor! And Rory Gallagher and the Who you know, so it was the sort of label we thought would be good. A guy called Alan Black, their A&R man, came over. It was all arranged by Terri I think.

MRR: It must've seemed like the biggest thing in the world!
You thought you were gonna be a pop star. It wasn't so much the attraction of being famous, that was part of it, but it was just playing music.

MRR: And did you start showing up in NME and Sounds at this point?
We did, and at Easter before the A levels, Polydor flew us over and put on all the nice treatment that they do, all a lot of bollocks but at that age you fall for it. I fell for it, we all did, lovely hotels and all. We recorded "I Can't Cope" in Polydor Studios, which was actually produced by the A&R man Alan Black who actually did a show called *Rock Goes to College* in the early '70s. It was quite a successful radio program. "I Can't Cope" was released. The only good side was their marketing budget. They were placing half page ads in NME or whatever, but apart from those ads that cost probably £100 or £200 pounds they really did very little for us. So that brings us up to just as we were about to leave school and the first release. Also at that time "Don't Ring Me Up" was licensed to Rough Trade.

After we finished school we moved from Belfast and set up Protex camp in London. Our manger got us an old mini mansion of a house in Chessington Surrey. It had loads of bedrooms and a big rehearsal room and was in a lovely setting. It was great for parties. It was great living in London, seeing bands we wanted to see, a great social scene etc.

The band played all the London venues at the time as well as sometimes travelling to gigs outside London. It was decided by Polydor to start the album and RAK studios was booked. It was a fantastic experience, Micky Most's Studios, the home of Suzi Quatro, Smokie, etc . We spent hours recording, but weren't happy with the outcome and the producer split from Polydor and us. We then later moved on to IBC studios, renamed Barn Studios (also known as Portland Studios). Chas Chandler who played in the Animals and managed Jimi Hendrix and Slade recorded us. We finally got to meet Slade.

During this time we secured a support slot on the UK Boomtown Rats tour. This band were at their peak with "I Don't Like Mondays" having come out. It raised our profile as journalists and music biz types were always about the hotels etc. We also did two nights of an Adam and the Ants tour, which wasn't really our audience so we pulled out.

We also brought the legendary BP Fallon on tour with us, helping with publicity and we had a introduction to the rock'n'roll life on the road. We got to play some major venues and after several weeks we became more competent and confident players.

MRR: Wow, it was all moving very fast. Could you give a rough description of what an average Belfast gig would've been like at that point in terms of atmosphere / venue etc?

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I remember just going in with my Gibson SG copy on the bus, an 8:00 p.m. bus or something into town, totally, totally deserted, getting off at the city hall, with nobody there except for the security forces and the odd punk. The Brits were there, the cops were there, there was the "ring of steel" which you got searched going through. Then I'd make my way through around to the Harp Bar which was really desolate, which is now the Cathedral Quarter, what would be your Temple Bar [main tourist area in Dublin] but in those days it was really desolate, as was Temple Bar in those days. It was very dark, very eerie. Where Debenhams is now, there was a hotel called the Grand Central that had been taken over by the British army. It was all sandbags, it was like something out of a film. That's what you were kind of going through to get to the Harp Bar which was in a desolate part of town anyway, kind of seedy and eerie. *Shellshock Rock* kind of sums that up a wee bit, it captures it.

MRR: And when you're leaving to get that 8 o'clock bus what are your parents' attitudes?
Well, they kinda knew where I was going and what I was going to do. Looking back now, as a parent, I'm very grateful because I don't know if I was them, for my son I'd be much stricter! So I'm very, very grateful for them for that, to let me do that.

MRR: Compared to back then, how do you feel about how Belfast has changed?
It's changed for the better! The gigs have changed. To get back to the Harp Bar, you've probably seen the photographs, it had the bomb cages, it was very small, it was just all punks and people who liked music, it was a cross-section of the community which was very rare in Belfast. Now in Belfast, it's totally changed on the surface but I think under the surface the troubles are still bubbling away; the bombing last night in Derry and on the other side of town there were all these weapons discovered.

MRR: So do you feel to some extent that the issue has been glossed over a bit?
Oh yeah, it's very much like that. The title of the new album is *Tightrope* and that's what it's about. Never wrote a political statement or feeling in my life but just I feel it with being a bit older.

MRR: Did you feel pressure at the time to shed light on what was going on? To be political or apolitical?
No, the politics was all around us, the trouble was all around us, in my school especially in the west of the city it was like every day coming home you'd join in the riot—it was good craic, you know. It wasn't just me, I was just typical. It affected other people more. I went to a Catholic school and many kids were nationalist republicans. The other three members of the band were Protestants at a different school and with different backgrounds. Politics and religion didn't matter at all to our band. But no, I wanted to get away from all that, I think Protex all wanted to get away from that. We saw it on TV at night, we saw it during the day. It was a release. It wasn't a conscious decision to get away or anything.

MRR: It's always fascinated me that so many of the Northern bands, with the exception of Stiff Little Fingers, Outcasts, and a couple others, were writing really pretty love songs
Yeah there seems to be some kind of history of that going back to the '60s bands here, it's very much like that.

MRR: And do you feel that might have to do with the fact that all day and night there was such a barrage of intense conflict?
I think it probably did. We didn't really want to be a part of it.

MRR: Was it escapism?
I think it was subconsciously. I think punk and the aggression of sometimes how the guitars, or how Protex played, possibly came from that. I'll always remember in my school there were a lot of people who really lived in it, in the Falls or whatever, it was tough in all parts of the city. But I remember guys coming to me and saying "Why the fuck aren't you writing about these Troubles?" "'Cos I don't want to" "It's your duty!" Getting a wee bit of pressure. I do remember that. Because they'd heard maybe "Don't Ring Me Up" on the radio and then heard Stiff Little Fingers. I just wanted to play pop music!

MRR: There's the Clash lyric in "1977": *"No Elvis, Beatles, or the Rolling Stones"* and that was the music people would've been listening to before. Did you feel pressure to shed that?
No, I liked those bands and I really liked the Small Faces.

MRR: Yeah, especially on the new album you can hear some of the kind of '60s jangly stuff a bit.
I think that's what Protex was always all about. I know it wasn't cool to like the Stones and stuff like that, but we still listened to it. But we bought a lot more punk records than the Stones' back catalogue.

MRR: How did things finish up at Polydor? You recorded that album that didn't end up being released.
We did "I Can't Cope" which got into the charts but didn't chart high enough. The whole thing then was to get a hit single on be on *Top of the Pops*. Undertones had done it and we hoped we'd do it. The second single was "I Can Only Dream." There's a difference of opinion in the band here I suppose because "A Place in Your Heart" didn't sound like Protex, the whole production…It's a good pop record and it's well produced but it's not like any of our other records at that point. I suppose somebody in some boardroom was saying "We need a hit, what about Protex? Sort it out!" This is my reading of it.

Pete Gage brought us to Rockfield Studios in Wales, a really good studio. We came out with a really well-produced pop record. It sounded great for another band. I didn't write the song, Dave wrote it. Looking back on it now it was so different and we could never reproduce it live, we could never get the piano onstage. It was always in the background and the handclaps and the phaser and the flanger, it was nothing like what Protex were about. Whereas if you go back to the recording of it on *Strange Obsessions* it's totally different. So I think Polydor were sort of trying to push us through. Anyway, the contract wasn't renewed. We'd recorded the album but to be honest the band at that time weren't really that happy.

The difference between this album and what we did before is there was no producer. I was the producer along with the rest of the guys in the band and Vic who recorded us. I knew what sound and feel I wanted. With Polydor and Chas it was going all over the place, there was no real focus. We were young. We thought that was how it was done. We thought these are the guys that make records.

MRR: You guys travelled to New York for some gigs.
That came about through our manager. There was a club called Hurrah that was big in the late '70s / early '80s who had expressed an interest through our manager. It was a husband and wife, they wanted to bring us there. It was so exciting for us. It was on the first budget airline, the Freddie Laker, and it was for 99 quid return so there ya go! That was 1980, I think.

MRR: So there was the first International Festival of Punk and New Wave at the Ulster Hall over two nights in 1980—I was just wondering if you remember the band the Stimulators, who were over from New York?

Yeah, I remember them! I know Denise and all, we stayed with them in New York on our second visit with Protex when we played Hurrah in the early days. There was Denise and Harley, I was in contact with Harley, he's got a book coming out now, Harley Flanagan, he's a real hardcore punk now! He hung out with us when we were over. When that footage in Hurrah was shot (1980), he was very young. I remember Denise, I don't remember much of the other people. We stayed with them in their apartment in the Lower East Side for part of our visit.

MRR: Wow! And what were Stimulators like at the gig in Belfast?

Great! They were superstars here because they'd come over from America. [*laughs*]

MRR: Harley claims to have brought the whole skinhead thing to New York after meeting skinheads in Belfast.

Yeah, I think the Outcasts would've been into that kind of thing. But yeah I remember that festival in the Ulster Hall, it was a big deal, and I think the way it is in the film (*Good Vibrations*) is probably true—everyone was on the guestlist, haha, it was a bit crazy. It was a good event for the whole punk movement and for the city.

MRR: Were you aware in the years after Protex finished of the growing cult status?

Not at all.

MRR: So when Sing Sing got in touch…

That really took my surprise. I left Protex and didn't really listen to Protex, it had been and gone, I'd moved on. I remember someone in the '90s saying "Oh you know that whole punk thing's taking off?" but at the time I'd no idea.

They got in contact about releasing *Strange Obsessions* and it was such a surprise. So that was 2010. Dave contacted me, we hadn't spoken for seventeen years or so, and said "You know there seems to be a bit of interest over the internet, should we think of getting together, we could get other players?" I kind of said "Thanks, but no thanks" but later on he persisted a wee bit and then the *Good Vibrations* film was about to come out and Dave was saying "Look on the internet, there's serious interest in the record, we might get a gig somewhere in Belfast." So we got back together. We needed a bass player and we needed a drummer. I had been working in a hotel promoting bands and was promoting Glam Slam, a '70s tribute band Gordie was playing in at the time. Johnny Hero, the DJ, said he'd get Gordie to phone me. Gordie came down and we got together with a bassist I had played with in bands in the '90s. So yeah, we practiced and got the set together. Stuart Bailey (BBC DJ) contacted me and asked if we'd be prepared to play a gig in the Black Box at the premiere of *Good Vibrations*, so that was our first gig. We would've gotten back together anyway, we had nothing to do with the film really, it was just sheer coincidence the film was happening. It was Sing Sing who had gotten us going again.

We played Rebellion in Blackpool around this time, I don't think we were ready though, it wasn't our best performance. Then we got an e-mail from '77 Records in Tokyo and that was a surprise, disbelief, the next thing we ended up doing two sold-out nights there. He recorded the two shows and put them out as an album. He re-released "Don't Ring Me Up" and another recording too. We really didn't think that could ever happen.

After those gigs people we were meeting were asking "What about new stuff?" We hadn't thought about new stuff! We played Germany after that at the Wild Wax festival in Hamburg and Berlin. I remember when we got home, we were chatting on the bus from the airport and it was "Right, Dave I'll come around to your place with some new songs and you play me your new songs." That was the agreement and the next day Dave says he's leaving the band. It was a shellshock for me, it was so disappointing. It had been going so good. I couldn't understand why but I can understand more now. It was like losing the band to me. The original Protex was like one of those teenage gangs you know.

After Japan the bass player had left too. Then John Rossi came in, who I knew from Shock Treatment, he also played with Snow Patrol on the first few tours! He's a great guy, a great musician, he's very passionate about Protex too. Norm joined around then too, he also plays in Glam Slam with Gordie, they play Slade, T-Rex kind of stuff. I'm really, really lucky to have these guys in the band.

MRR: With the new album, were these songs you had written over the years since Protex broke up or did you only start writing again when *Strange Obsessions* came out in 2010? Who had you been playing with in the years in between?

I had been in and out of bands but nothing serious. When I left Protex I didn't play music for a long time, I was trying to build a career, then got married and had a family. I think it was in the '90s I started playing again in a rhythm and blues Dr. Feelgood kind of band in the bars in Belfast, then another band called the Greeters which was more poppy. I was writing but not in a big way. I didn't really start writing 'til Protex reformed. However there's one song on the new album, "Shining Star," where the lyrics are from a Greeters song and the guitar riff was from a previous band called Rumble Mambo. I wasn't sure how it would turn out but it's one of my favorites on the new record.

MRR: We spoke earlier about the struggles you faced as a teenage band in a time of great uncertainty and conflict, now that you are older and have jobs / responsibilities / family what struggles do you face as a band?

Someone texted me this morning asking if we could play a festival in Spain. In the old days it would've been "Yep!" whereas now it's "What am I doing with my family? How busy is work? What are the other guys doing? What gigs have Grand Slam / Shock Treatment / the lads' other bands?" Tying everyone down is the challenge.

Protex have a new LP Tightrope *out now on Bachelor Records. Get it: bachelor records.com.*

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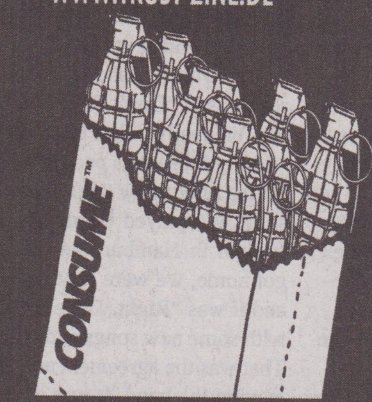

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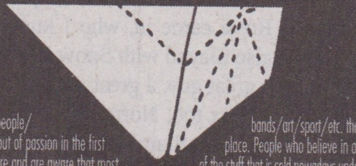

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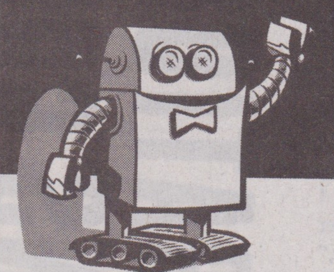

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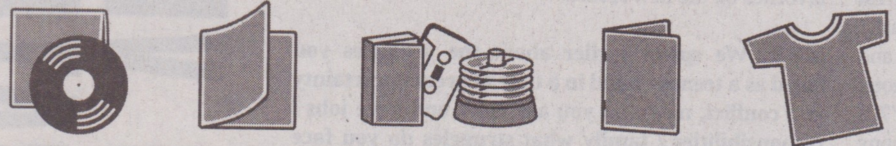

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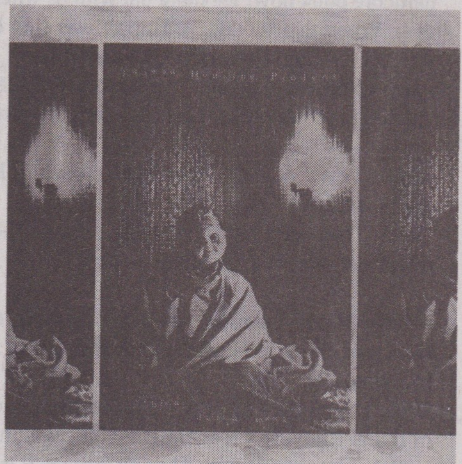

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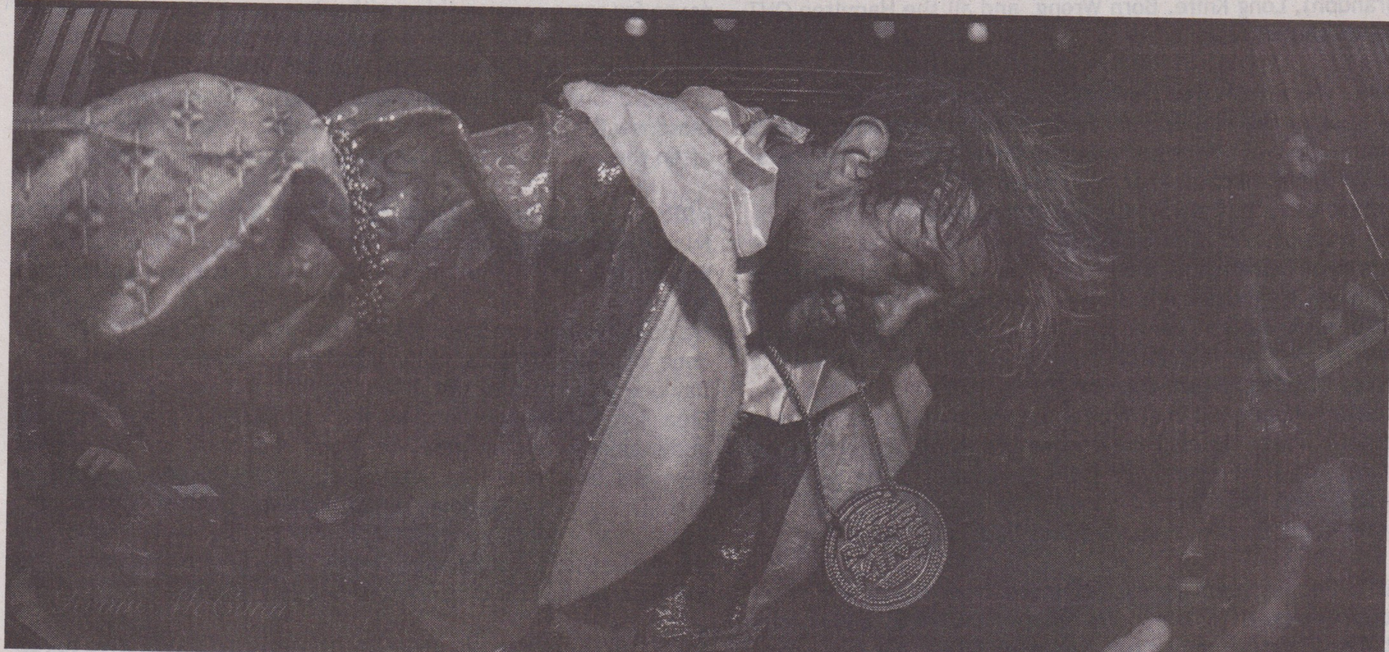
FUCK YOU PAY ME

Fuck You Pay Me is the latest in a string of bands featuring one dude in particular who's been a lynchpin in the Midwest going back at least 30 years. Always outspoken, whether you like it or not. Always entertaining, sometimes at your expense. Even occasionally controversial. Literally putting his life on the line a time or two to entertain you cretins. All these things apply well enough but, enough yammering. Let's talk FYPM with a true believer. Mr. three chords and a cloud of dust himself...Tony Erba.

Interview by Tony Bevaque. Photos provided by Kevin McCann.



MRR: After almost 30 years that I can think of doing music, booking shows, and maintaining your position as Parma's greatest natural resource, why keep screaming? It's obviously gotta be getting harder on you (I know it is for me) to go out there and make like your ass is on fire for the kids.

I really wonder sometimes, but I quickly snap out of second guessing myself. At this point, it's just "what I do," I guess. After going a year or so without a band, which is as long as a layoff as I usually get, I start getting weird and fall into lethargy and depression. I need the action, the ego boost, the instant gratification, and the travel. Basically most of my social activity is based around this lifestyle so it'd be a huge void without it. I need to be where the action is.

MRR: Now, three-quarters of FYPM was AmpsIIEleven who, outside certain circles, didn't seem to get the props I thought they deserved. What happened with AIIE?

Oh, Amps did pretty well. We were a "rawk" band and did short runs with bands like REO Speedealer, Nashville Pussy etc. We were received pretty well everywhere we went but that rock

revival scene kinda peaked in the mid 2000s and we had lineup changes and just said fuck it. Aaron the guitar player and Steve the drummer are in FYPM.

We formed this band after a Face Value reunion. I had both those guys play in a reunion version of Value and we played this big show in Cleveland. The promoter tried to stiff me on the payout. The fucking headliner got $20,000 and he tried to give me $500. After haggling with the guy I got a better envelope but what the fuck? I was pissed about the whole thing and told those guys we should start a vicious, uncompromising classic sounding hardcore band with a mean streak. Just come out and try to recreate the Circle Jerks circa '82 or something. Time will tell if we accomplish that. Off to a good start so far.

MRR: You've been active, doing road work and whatnot. Any highlights? Any new bands people should watch for?
We play every weekend and do some long weekends as well. We had a west coast swing booked and all ready to go then my boss rescinded my time off. Almost every out of town gig is a highlight for me. I love the travel and hanging out, staying up late, eating pizza, acting immature, seeing raging bands, and the instant gratification of the audience going ape when we play. Grand Rapids, Detroit, Pittsburgh, Columbus, Austin, Buffalo, Akron, Kent, Albany, Cincy and most Midwest towns are really good to us and we are thrilled anyone gives a shit at all about our dumb band. Bands we dig are Bridesmaid, Bill Bondsmen, Chromosome Damage, Wetbrain, Eel, No Time, Prisoner, Scuzz, We March, Rotten UK, Obsessor (RIP Brandon), Long Knife, Born Wrong, and all the Hamilton ONT bands and punks.

MRR: You mentioned Wetbrain—it seems like after the end of a lot of the classic '90s HxC bands in Cleveland there's been a revival of not just punk and hardcore but also metal bands from there. Is that accurate?
I think there has always been a steady stream. Some go by the wayside and are quickly replaced. As long as you have a central hub such as a punkhouse or a club—both of which we have—then there will always be action. There are quite a bit of good current bands and strong personalities involved. Even those I don't particularly care for are at least making things happen. Bands include FYPM, Wetbrain, Bad Noids, Vanilla Poppers, Kill The Hippies, Cruelster and their assorted spinoffs, Party Plates, Fake Muslims, Lacerate, and a shitload more, and I'd be remiss if I didn't mention some seriously kickass and underlooked bands from Akron like Smash 'n' Grab, Rabid Reason, Feds, Rational Dads, and Weird Penis.

MRR: People seem to expect more from Clevo and from your pedigree to the point where they act outrageous at Clevo bands' shows because they think it's the norm. What's your take?
TE: Oh hell, I guess they do that because it *is* the norm? I mean it just kind of began when the H-100s and Darvocets started playing in the mid '90s at parties in Kent and really took off during the Speak In Tongues era and has really never abated. Other towns saw that and tried to one-up the misbehavior and so on and so forth. It's not a staged thing, like GWAR or whatever, and I don't mind when the audience is rowdy as shit, so long as no one's threatened for real. In a lot of ways it's very cartoonish. But it's a very good cartoon.

MRR: While we're at it, might as well spread the lore more—best, most insane gig story ever?
Well, there's a lot of gigs I remember fondly; selling out the Babylon with Face Value the first time was awesome, those crowds were fresh and amped during that era. The 9 Shocks "night of the long knives" as Konya called it was pretty infamous, when young freshly minted nazi skins showed up and several people in the crowd got a lil' stabby with them. GSMF at Chicago Fest was a fabulous disaster, I'll never forget this guy Fabio swinging from the chandelier going "wheeeee!!" as the place exploded with trash, fireworks, and flying bodies. The Louisville shows Face Value played with Endpoint and / or Kinghorse to 2,000 plus people were great. Havoc fests. I don't know, I prefer the ones out of town because if you can get over on the road then you've accomplished something. One gig I remember for frustration's sake was the Old Barn Fest in Wisconsin—the guy sent us a map that was purposely misleading to "throw off the cops." We based our whole Midwest run around that show and although we *finally* got there before our set time, they wouldn't let us play, due to "dirt and dust getting in the PA." Typical 9 Shocks tour.

MRR: Fucking Kinghorse! Such a great band! Since you brought 'em up...Chances of a 9 Shocks reunion? GSMF?
The further away we get from the last time 9 Shocks played, the less present we are in people's memories, including our own, so it's kind of weird to think of doing one. I mean we are all still friends—Wedge, of course, I see constantly and we play with Wetbrain all the time. There's just not any real pressing need to rehash right now, all the guys are busy with current bands and to pause for some reunion thing without a compelling reason would just be real odd. [*Ed. Note: 9 Shocks Terror are playing a reunion show June 3, 2017 in Brooklyn*]. Gordon Solie Motherfuckers has played a bunch of reunions and it seems easier for whatever reasons with that band. But no one wants to go to the well too often thereby rendering it no longer special when we do play.

MRR: So, like a lot of bands have been know to do, you guys have performed under guises more than once. What led to it? For people not in the know, what bands have you performed as?
We do the Halloween show at Now That's Class and have previously done Van Failin' to great aplomb and even released a Record Store Day one-sided picture disc 7" as Van Failin'. Last year we did GG Erba and the Jobbers, and as you can imagine it was a poopy, nude, bloody, scummy mess and a hell of a lot of fun, and we did several shows under that guise doing strictly GG and the Jobbers sets. This year we're doing something even dumber—Kisscharge, which really needs no explanation. If you've never heard Two Monstrous Nuclear Stockpiles sung by a gay Jewish man with a lisp and Paul Stanley makeup, well here's your chance.

MRR: You expecting the Kiss Army to roll out for that Kisscharge gig? I always wonder if our kind of tribute bands get the normies out...
It hasn't happened yet but at our age it'll be the Kiss Army Reserves that come out.

MRR: Big picture question time...I've been rolling this around in my head. In today's world of safe spaces, trigger warnings, etc., a lot of the so-called classics of yore would never have even been accepted due to content/behavior. Where does a maniac who bleeds, has been known to swing a chain or two, get naked, and generally bring an unsafe dangerous vibe fit in

all of this? I'm not bagging on "the kids." I'm more curious about your take.

I don't want to say my approach is theater because that implies it's like staged or rehearsed, and I would never do anything so pretentious, I just wing it and do whatever. I like to entertain myself in the spur of the moment and if it involves blood, fire, havoc etc., well, then so be it, but there are certainly lines I don't cross—damage to the club that's anything more than superficial. Certainly I don't want to hurt anyone other than myself.

I've always viewed punk as the theater of the absurd, whether it's like 45 Grave or Crudos or Agnostic Front back in their pledging allegiance days—I mean, sure they were dumb, but authentic, and while not my cup of tea, the authenticity of a band like that back then was palpable, and you're right, wouldn't pass muster these days. wWen I was coming up it was more of a "big tent" philosophy so there was more of a place for weirdos of all stripes. I mean, prior to the G.L.O.S.S. breakup I was working like hell to book them here in town and then I was really going to try to get Sockeye to play that show—it would've been such a sweet collection of freakers at the gig if I pulled it off, and that's what I love, freakers, maniacs, weirdo, etc. all flipping out together. Also as far as my own deal, most people—*most*—seem to understand that it's action and kinetic energy I'm going for, not anything harmful or that has a hint of an "ism" attached to it.

MRR: Since you're on the one big tent line and talking about inclusiveness and, dare I say, positivity...Commentary on the *Destroy Cleveland* controversies?

It's a sticky situation with that thing. The guy who did it seemed pretty earnest at the onset and since I was one of the first people he became acquainted with out of the whole Cleveland scene, old or current, I did my best to assist with videos, advice with dealing with certain personalities, etc. He had booked FYPM once in Youngstown and it went fine. That was the extent of my dealings with him up until he started working on the film in earnest. I have no idea what the hell went on in Austin where it's said he got in a bar fight and hit a trans person and said highly derogatory things, but his strategy of constantly bickering with people online whether they were legitimate questions or simply trolls sank his movie and was his Waterloo in my opinion. He really rescued defeat from the jaws of victory with his own mouth in my opinion and once he got shitty with me, I said the hell with it and just washed my hands of him. There's a pattern of treatment towards women on his end that I want no part of.

MRR: Let's keep things philosophical...All time best rasslin' match? Best burger in your neck of the woods? Preferred pinball machine?

Fave rasslin' match I saw was probably not that great in all actuality but it was the first live event of the sort I ever attended so it made a big impact. It was at Mt Carmel church and had Johnny Powers who was just a few years removed from his big run here in Cleveland vs. Abdullah The Butcher. My dad's relative Tony Marino who was a big name in the Cleveland and Pittsburgh territories in the '60s as "Battman" also wrestled.

Abby arrived to the building about halfway thru the card and strode through the crowd in an all white suit with Diamond rings on each fingers and a white porkpie hat and mirrored shades. A hush came across the crowd as they knew the great one was in the building. The match itself was a typical Abby brawl—get white-hot heat on the babyface to the point of a near riot and then let Powers make his comeback and both bleed heavily as the match goes to a double countout. I was hooked! This was around '79...

Best burger? Probably Stevenson's in Euclid on Lakeshore Boulevard. It was literally a bait shop that had a bar and a few stools and a sagging floor that eventually was shut down for building code issues. It's since reopened in a former strip bar down the street on E.185th and the burgs are as good as ever, since they kept the same grill.

Preferred pinball machine is the mid-2000s Elvira Scared Stiff one and for classic games I love the original Black Knight, Joust, and my eternal nemesis and the dumbest game ever, Orbiter 1!

MRR: What? No Gorf? Q*Bert? Okay...The Midwest has always had a different vibe. It seems like that helps with bands here. More cooperative than competitive, in my opinion. There's always a lot of music, which I've attributed to having nothing to do during the winters here. What's your take?

It could be more cooperative, that may be true. Although I find that there's stuck-up assholes everywhere. Perhaps here in town and in Detroit there's a groundedness that comes from eternal defeatism and a general malaise. I laugh to myself at the latest punk elites in any town, with their smugness and secret handshakes. Don't they realize that they'll be long gone and a mere footnote in just one election cycle? Seriously, get over yourselves—punk is small and insignificant enough to the squares without making it worse and even more exclusionary. I do think that the rust belt work ethic is a whole different animal though. Detroit, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Buffalo have a determined grit and a non-bullshit approach to things and it stands out.

MRR: Truth! While on the subject of Midwest metal, Jim Konye (Nunslaughter, 9 Shocks, Schnauzer, every other band ever including the band you are thinking of forming now) passed away recently. The outpouring of love from the international community was intense. You two were tight going back to being kids. I thought I'd open it up to you sharing some thoughts on him.

Jim was my oldest and in a lot of ways my best friend, even if we weren't really BFF at the time of his passing. That was just typical Jim, he was a bit of an antagonist and sometimes I'd have to tell him to go piss up a rope. But that's hardly unique if you knew Jimmy, he really pushed buttons but would always finish strong and end up making you piss your pants with laughter. He was the most unique man I ever knew, a kind, caring person who was a central and constant figure in my life from age seventeen to age forty-seven. We had thousands of miles under our belts together on tour but my favorite times by far were just the old days riding our BMX bikes to the record store, watching Domestic Crisis practice, family vacations and arguing about almost everything. As you can see I'm getting emotional answering the question. I miss him dearly and cry a lot. He was truly a great human.

MRR: Let's wrap this up... Last words?

Thanks very much for the interview and thank you to all who have booked this band and supported us in any way. I hope we give you a good bang for your buck. This dumb shit means the world to me and I am thrilled anyone gives a shit about anything I do.

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MOVIES

BRING ME THE HEAD OF GENE SISKEL

CAROLYN KEDDY

We are always looking for films to review. If you made one, send a copy to PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146 USA. If your film is playing in the San Francisco Bay Area let us know at carolyn@maximumrocknroll.com. We will go see it.

The opening of **The Allins** seems very incongruous with the legend of GG Allin. Fans, all male, show up at Allin's grave in New Hampshire to pay tribute. As one might expect, a tribute to GG Allin consists of shit, piss, booze, and drugs. People seem happy enough paying their respects. Then Merle Allin chases a group away, threatening them with a guitar for pissing on the gravestone. Merle is later seen scrubbing the gravestone clean. I got a good laugh wondering why would he expect people to show traditional respect. It is the perfect set up for a film that focuses on the other two Allins: mother Aleta and older brother Merle who survive the legend and death of GG Allin.

Aleta and Merle deal with their loss in opposite ways. Aleta wants to forget the performer known as GG Allin and remember her sweet son Kevin Michael Allin. Merle honors his brother's legacy by living in a house that is a shrine to him and selling as many products with GG's image as possible.

The Allins covers GG's childhood, rise, and fall. If you know anything about GG Allin you probably know most of the story. He was born Jesus Christ Allin. His father was abusive. His mother left him, taking her two children and raising them on her own. The family was poor, living without running water or electricity in a log cabin in the woods. The Allin brothers get into music. Merle forms the Boston band The Thrills. He also plays bass for Cheater Slicks. GG starts a glam band, but eventually gets into progressively more confrontational performances. He goes to jail a few times. He dies of an overdose in 1993.

I am fascinated by Merle. The level of merchandising he does is unbelievable. When GG was in jail for the first time, Merle got a band together for when he is released. The band becomes the Murder Junkies. Although not specifically pointed out, my take is that Merle was the businessman behind the scenes who was able to sustain GG's extravagant lifestyle. He doesn't seem to move on to the exploitation until after his death. I will give Merle the benefit of the doubt that he truly believes he is doing it to keep GG's memory alive.

Merle is constantly working his sale technique. He advises Murder Junkies drummer Dino Sex not to "give 'em away, when people will pay for them." The them he is referring to is Sex's drum sticks. Merle takes a bunch of them to sell for Dino. A fan comes over the house to look at a Ramones t-shirt that had belonged to GG. Merle tells it will cost a lot of money. In one of the more telling scenes, Merle makes a painting with his own shit to sell on eBay. Humorously Merle uses gloves and delicately handles his excrement. I don't think his brother would have done it that way.

Aleta has the opposite coping mechanism. She doesn't quite deny her son's lifestyle. However, she maintains that he was really just a good boy. She also questions her own mothering skills for having brought up these two boys. She gave up her cemetery plot for GG to be buried in. When she dies, Merle is going to cremate her and leave her ashes on top of GG's grave. She doesn't shy away from GG's friends and fans. She has a good time introducing the Murder Junkies at a party on the 20th anniversary of GG's death.

The Murder Junkies continue to tour without GG. Fortunately the replacement frontmen don't put on a GG act. They just trudge along keeping the legacy alive. (toolboxfilm.dk)

Niles is a small town that is part of Fremont, CA approximately forty miles east of San Francisco. In the beginning of the 20th century Niles was the location of Essanay Studios, one of the first movie studios on the West Coast. Its most famous production is Charlie Chaplin's **The Tramp**. In 2004 the Niles Essanay Silent Film Museum formed to restore the former Edison Theater and now shows silent films every Saturday night as well as runs a museum dedicated to silent film.

April 18 is the anniversary of the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake. It's the one that everyone thinks of when we talk about earthquakes in the Bay Area. In its honor the Niles Essanay Silent Film Museum holds an annual tribute. This year the films were **The Shock**, **A Trip Down Market Street** and **Destruction Of San Francisco**.

A Trip Down Market Street and **Destruction Of San Francisco** are two films shot in 1906. **A Trip Down Market Street** was filmed right before the earthquake. **Destruction Of San Francisco** is a compilation of films made by various film companies of the aftermath. Both are available for viewing online. Check them out.

The Shock is a 1923 film starring Lon Chaney. Its climatic scene takes place during the 1906 San Francisco earthquake. Chaney plays a crippled criminal, Wilse Dilling. He is called upon by the big crime boss Queen Ann to set out for a small town and await further instructions. She has set him up with a job that will be helpful with what she has planned. What she doesn't expect is that Wilse starts to enjoy small town living. There is some intrigue and some romance. Even with the rather low budget (by today's standards) special effects, the big finale is really enjoyable.

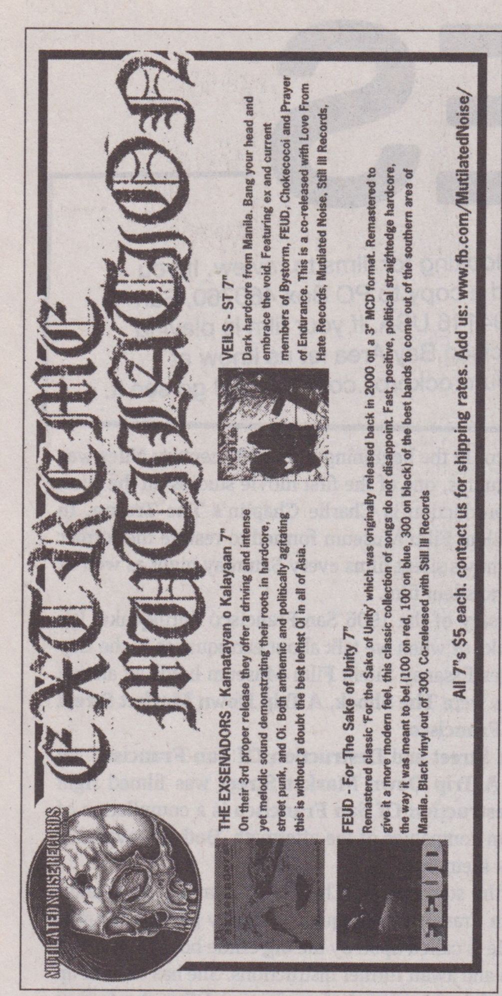
I would recommend any Saturday night for hitting up the Niles Essanay Silent Film Museum and taking in a film. However, *Chaplin Days* will be taking over Niles on July 21-23. It always promises an over the top tribute to Niles' favorite son. (nilesfilmmuseum.org)

If you're like me you've been thinking about nuclear war too much these days. I started reading articles on what to do and have been figuring out where I will bunker down to try to avoid fallout. Will Trump do what other presidents have only considered? He's crazy enough to push the button (most likely accidentally). My only counterargument for it not happening is that the 1% are greedy enough that they won't want to risk everything they have. Hopefully, because of that they will succeed in keeping him reigned in.

Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned To Stop Worrying And Love The Bomb is the perfect film for these tense political days. It is a satirical film made by Stanley Kubrick in 1964. It recently screened at Oakland's fabulous Paramount Theatre. They show films once a month. I highly recommend seeing one at this beautiful Art Deco theater.

Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned To Stop Worrying And Love The Bomb is about loose cannon General Jack D. Ripper, who manages to figure out a way to drop a nuclear bomb Russia without his superiors' approval. He holes himself up on his base convincing his fellow soldiers that anyone who tries to get in is a Russian posing as an American. The President and his cabinet are bumbling and inept. They can't agree on anything or stop bickering long enough to solve the problem. The Russian Premier is too busy partying to help.

There are so many great quotes in **Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned To Stop Worrying And Love The Bomb**. The one I will leave you with is a classic and still gets many laughs. "Gentlemen, you can't fight in here! This is the War Room." I hope to see you next month. (paramounttheatre.com)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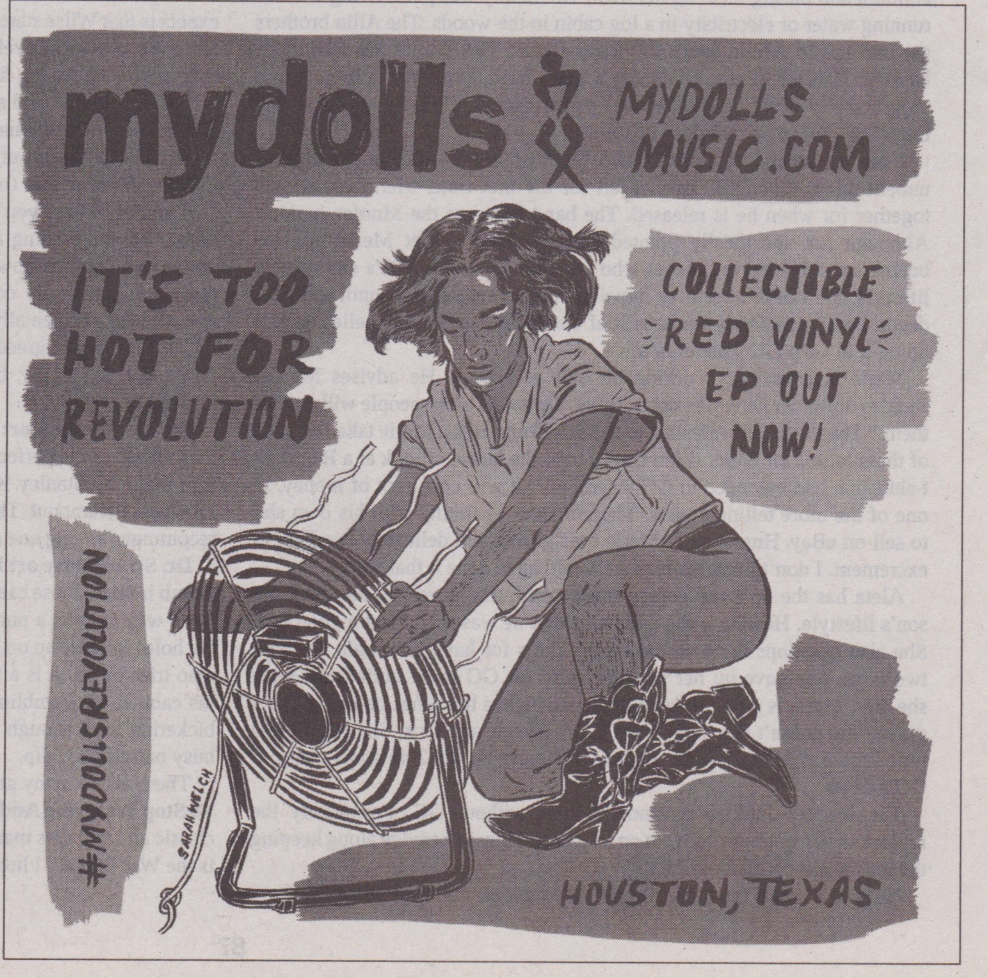
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RECORDS

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(PA) Pete Avery
(RH) Ryan Hertel
(RK) Ramsey Kanaan
(RL) Ray Lujan
((RO) Rotten Ron Ready
(SW) Shivaun Watchorn
(WN) Robert Collins

AFTER LAUGHTER – "Quest For Sanity" CD
Second full-length from this Polish quartet doing their damnedest to recreate the melodic / emo hardcore sounds of the late '80s. It's more RITES OF SPRING than DAG NASTY or later period DESCENDENTS—and not bad with it, either! Eleven tracks / thirty-six minutes straight out of Revolution Summer. (RK)
(Antena Krzyku)

AUTISTI – CD
Eight-song CD from this Swiss indie rock act, incorporating shoegaze elements of SPACEMEN 3 or SWIRLIES along with the explosiveness of *Daydream Nation*-era SONIC YOUTH. The obvious homemade weirdness and lo-fi warmth of a four-track recording adds some needed depth to this release, making it sound like a lost hit from the early '90s. Not bad. (GH)
(self-released)

AXE RASH – "Head Vs Wall" EP
I kept rooting for this record to get just a bit better, but it didn't quite make it. It's got a nice CAREER SUICIDE meets SAIRAAT MIELET sonic aesthetic: abrasive guitar, snotty throaty vocals, and solid 1-2-1-2 drumming when it's not a mid-paced ride. But the songs don't really go anywhere, and while many of the riffs are interesting, they lack the hooks to be truly captivating. The occasional effects that get thrown in for a second don't really add anything either. All the ingredients are there, and this kind of thing is generally good live even if the songwriting isn't up to par; hopefully they nail it next record. (DG)
(De:nihil / Imminent Destruction)

AYE NAKO – "Silver Haze" LP
Fucking awesome! These Brooklyn queer punks follow up their phenomenal first record with yet another killer full-length. Structurally, this is a pop punk album. It has its moments of spinning off into other zones—at times it can seem like a fuzzed out early SONIC YOUTH album, at others SUPERCHUNK seems like the inspiration. There are even hints of a '90s emo vibe. But an infectious melodic punk force is always at the heart of it, driving each song into the next. Lyrics touch on identity politics, self-reflection, and anxiety. So much anxiety! There is something truly special in art born out of anxiety, turning the emotions that cripple us into something that pushes us forward. Love this record! (FS)
(Don Giovanni)

BEAST AS GOD / CROWS – split EP
BEAST AS GOD play dismal crust with tight '90s hardcore snare and rhythmic blasting breakdowns. Their side is one track of ferocious epic crust that isn't overly emotional. I'm reminded of HIS HERO IS GONE with more depression and organic structure. CROWS start off similarly crushing in tone and quickly snap away into a furor of abrasive, snarling hardcore. This is a brutal old school hardcore compliment to BEAST AS GOD's more modern crust side. CROWS continue with two more tracks of hateful powerviolence blasts with loose, wild, and expansive composition. Both sides are unpredictable. (JR)
(Dingleberry / Distroy / Superfi / Wooaaargh)

BERLIN BLACKOUTS – "Kissed by the Gutter" LP
This is street punk of the Fat Wreck variety from four road dogs from Berlin. Every member fits the mold to make BERLIN BLACKOUTS feel like a band you remember from the '90s pop punk boom, even though this is only their second album together. I often find that track two on many albums is one of the best, and that's true again here with "Deadland." (RH)
(Wanda)

THE BLOOD ROYALE / GOD FEARING FUCK – split EP
THE BLOOD ROYALE play mid-tempo, crossover crust that is heavily informed by old school death metal like OBITUARY. The ever-present double bass drum and guitar solos definitely push these dudes further into metal territory than some may be willing to tread, but I dig it. GOD FEARING FUCK has some of the same tendencies, but they are more in line with epic TRAGEDY crust than heavy metal. They also have some sick guitar solos that lift them above the pack. This one is an overall ripper. Check it out. (BA)
(self-released)

BOSS HOG – "Brood X" LP
The artwork of this LP looks like the cover of a straight-to-DVD body horror flick. Perhaps intentional? As a teenager, ROYAL TRUX were my post PUSSY GALORE band of choice; I don't think I ever

actually listened to BOSS HOG, though their persona / aesthetic was very memorable. This is a lot slicker than I thought they would be. It's got an icy / city sleek veneer—you could imagine it being used in the decadent party scene or the part where the murderer is speeding away. BOSS HOG make sexy music with purred / snarled vocals and guitars and seductive slow rhythms. It's a slinky fine sound, perfect for getting ready to go do something nasty. Music for leather-clad types moving around a mythical New York City disgusted and delighted by all it contains. (LG)
(In the Red)

DANNY BURK & THE INVADERS – "A'int Going Nowhere Till / I'm Sure"
Man, these '60s reissues are getting hella convincing. On Florida's Certified PR label, this is surprisingly fuzzed-out for Memphis circa 1966. The A-side is a bona fide R&B styled garage scorcher. The flip is a bit tamer Merseybeat style, but who needs two-siders anyway? This one rips, great for the dance floor. (GB)
(Certified PR)

BURNING ITCH – "Intergalactic Ass Hat" LP
After a no-joke fantastic debut, Thee ITCH's subsequent efforts, both in long and short form, have impressed only with lesser severity. This new LP, their second, moves further away from the vaguely dangerous loser punk I initially adored and steps closer to safer, often poppier territory. Although a one-man recording project, Detroit-inspired guitar punk is the chief touchstone here, though with zero seriousness to be heard anywhere. It's far from a dud, but I'm still left slightly disappointed. (MC)
(Heel Turn)

CAKEFIGHT – "Lightning Bolts" EP
Debut five-song EP from this Aussie two-piece, focusing on a familiar brand of schmaltzy fuzz-pop that might recall WHITE MYSTERY or any given MATT MELTON (who produces here) project. There's nearly no teeth to the tunes here, neither a playful bounce or a bashin' trounce to be heard. (MC)
(self-released)

CAVE STATE / CONCUSSIVE – split EP
This is what is up! A supersonic, powerviolence shred fest, from the East Bay to L.A. CAVE STATE do some old school crusty powerviolence that is straightforward and on point. If you like it heavy and dark, and fast and slow, then these fuckers will not disappoint. Next up is CONCUSSIVE, who like their powerviolence served raw and grimy. These East Bay youngsters hate music symbols, and love grinding noise. Is California still down to destroy? This little record says yes! (BA)
(To Live A Lie)

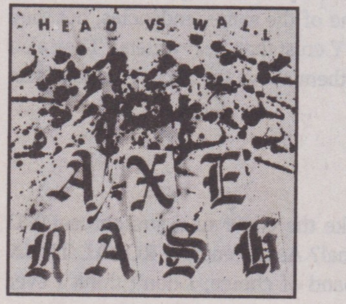
CFM – "Dichotomy Desaturated" LP
Yet another album from wunderkind Charlie Mootheart, he of MOONHEARTS and CULTURE KIDS fame. Not surprisingly, this LP is all big-league rock that mines the heavy '70s for inspiration, meandering and more delicate than FUZZ, but the emphasis is still always on the oomph. Rock, yes. Punk? A stretch, for sure. (MC)
(In The Red)

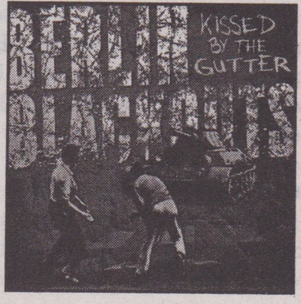
CITIZEN BLAST KANE – "Straight to Videodisc" LP
VHS collector house party garage punk from Hackensack or thereabouts—just barely crossing the thin red line between antagonistically goofy and egregiously wacky. Not sure if this just applies to the copy sent to *MRR* for review, but the jacket of this record smells kind of like stale beer and cold cuts left out in the sun, which might be a good olfactory cue for what this music sounds like. In a weird way, this makes me think of an early FLESHIES record, but from a less woke world where they'd end up singing things like *"Momos, jacklegs, commies and queers / it takes me forever to order one beer."* Overall, not my favorite cut of the month, though "King of the Park" is actually a pretty good song, perhaps more inspired for taking on the big targets like the local park rangers. (EW)
(Eradicator)

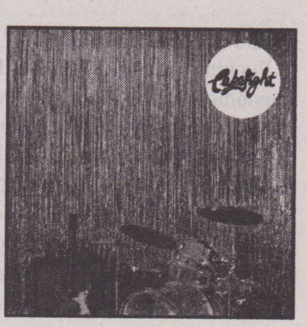
CLITERATI – "Looking for the Answers" EP
Wowzers, this is fuckin' awesome and totally not what I was expecting. Vocalist Ami Lawless has a long and storied history in punk, and I expected something in line with her earlier projects, only to be met with some heavy-ass mid-tempo D-beat boots to the ear! I guess Portland has that effect on people. Indeed, this EP fits in nicely alongside that city's tradition, forming another point on a line that extends from FINAL WARNING to RESIST to DETESTATION and (early) DEATHCHARGE. There are hints of VÖETSEK when they pick up the pace (à la the brief blast of "Burn"), but most of this is very controlled, Scandinavian-style D-beat crust with occasional speedy breaks and some interesting audio effects (the creepy spoken word bit in "Know God No Love" is very effective). "Virtue" closes the record with a choice mid-song mosh part and brutal final riff. Five songs that fly by and definitely leave you wanting more. This is a band that could pull off an LP no problem, a rare beast. Don't get fooled by the punny name—this band is as serious as a fucking heart attack. (AU)
(Tankcrimes)

COLD INSTITUTION – LP
Really solid post-punk from Finland sung in English. The record contains evident goth-y trappings à la SIOUXSIE but it also at times reveals a more punchy punk presence that reminds me of VICE SQUAD. Neither of these references are sufficient to describe the chillingly sincere lyrics dealing with imposed normalcy, social deviance, and personal anguish. Recommended. (LT)
(Bad Hair Life / Blame the Victim)

CONNOISSEUR – "Over the Edge" LP
All fake weed-heads, get the fuck out! Oakland's top "stoner violence" band CONNESSEUR only want the ears of those who smoke







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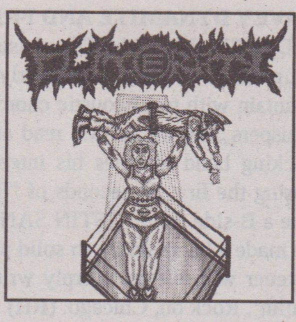


all day, every day! Are you tired of listening to '70s rock and reggae all the time? Are you concerned about weed smoking etiquette? Have you ever rolled a "grandfather joint?" If you answered yes to any of these questions then maybe it's time you put down the pipe, picked up the bong, and checked these guys out! (BA)
(Tankcrimes)

CORPSE / TWO FINGERED APPROACH – split LP

This record compiles CORPSE's 1983 demo tape along with TWO FINGERED APPROACH'S 1982 demo and EP. TWO FINGERED APPROACH are heavily influenced by the Crass Records family, which shows through their flat, direct peace punk-cum-UK82. Some of the hooks also bring CRISIS and the MOB to mind. CORPSE follows along in the same vein, but appear more inept in their beautifully sloppy recording, which endears me to them. They sing about the ongoing (still!) threat of nuclear war and their own government's involvement in killing civilians in El Salvador. This is an excellent document of some overlooked peace punk from the early '80s. (GH)
(Inflammable Material)

CROOKED BANGS – "II" LP

I suppose the closest one could come to pinning down the style of CROOKED BANGS would be to call them noise rock. This LP brings us nine driving songs absolutely slathered in overdrive and fuzz. I must admit, the first few notes of the A side were totally delectable in their distortion. Unfortunately, none of the songwriting really lives up to how good the strings sound. For whatever reason, whether it's the mix, the master, or just the similarity of the tracks, listening to this record is like listening to one long fuzzy smear as opposed to several unique songs. Taken on their own, the songs all have simple, solid, and driving beats, heavy on the toms (giving the rhythms an even more punishing feel), paired with supremely uncomplicated riffs. If this had been four songs instead of nine, cut at 45 so I could live in all that tasty fuzz, or even if the songs had more dynamics, to let there be heavy moments and lighter ones to make the heavy moments heavier, this could have been a great record. (LP)
(Nervous Intent)

CYANIDE PILLS – "Big Mistake / My Baby's Become a Right Wing Extremist"

If you're a fan of super catchy power pop songs that come in right around the two-minute mark, this disc will float your boat. My boat is totally floating right now. Catchy, melodic, witty lyrics—this record sounds like it came from 1979. This isn't my first run-in with CYANIDE PILLS and I hope it's not my last. (KK)
(Damaged Goods)

DANA – "A God Ignored is a Demon Born" LP

Psychedelic sludge punk from Columbus, working a PERE UBU angle that doesn't quite live up to the comparison, despite the band's cover of "Street Waves." There are plenty of weird elements here (constant theremin, pitched up vocals) but it sounds more self-aware than wild, and a lot of these songs are repetitive in the wrong way (many would be better off with a running time under two minutes instead of what feels like at least four). "Belly Rubber" cribs from "Shoop" by SALT N PEPA but turns it into something a lot less exciting than that sounds, though the guitarist gets wild with some heavy modulation to turn his solo into a weird scramble of dial-up tones. Even over a BO DIDDLEY beat like on "Mr. Goddamn" or a rave-up like "Bastard Child," things never cross beyond a battle of the bands level of intensity—maybe the band is too in the pocket to come really unhinged. (EW)
(Heel Turn)

DEATH CHURCH – "Playing God / Generations of Hate" flexi

Third two-song flexi from this Australian gloomy post-punk band. "Playing God" is like a modern rendition of a UK DECAY track, mainly due to the elongated howls and the icy guitar line on the chorus. "Generations of Hate" is more upbeat and thumping; it reminds me of early SIOUXSIE AND THE BANSHEES with a dude singing. The booklet-style cover features ten panels of various artworks by different artists, a format similar to the old CRASS-style foldout sleeves. Limited to 250. Solid release, but why oh why the flexis people? (MA)
(Winter Garden)

DEFUSE – "Cry Of Roar" EP

This is what you think of what someone talks about "howling, blown-out Japanese crasher crust." You're right on fucking target. (WN)
(MCR)

DEVIOUS ONES – "Djarum Summers" EP

It's been over ten years now since the VICIOUS ruled the world. Since that time, there have been literally hundreds of bands that tried to sound like them. In all that time, no one band has succeed in that endeavor more so than Detroit's DEVIOUS ONES. Both songs totally rip! If it weren't for the vocals this would be an amazing record. It's not that the singing sucks ('cause it doesn't, he's quite good!), it's just that the lyrics are so bad. Completely uninspired lyrics about getting dressed in fancy clothes and hanging out in coffee shops. I was loving this record until I started reading along with the liner notes. But really, how important are lyrics to you anyway? Half the time we have no idea what bands are singing about in the first place. You be the judge. (FS)
(No Front Teeth / Rust on the Blades)

DIAGNOSIS? BASTARD! – "Silenciado" 12"

These furious Swedes return with their first 12" offering and it's a blast, miles ahead of their earlier EP. They share some DNA with NINE SHOCKS TERROR, in that both bands have the ability to recreate the rock'n'roll / hardcore fusion style of Japanese bands without being explicitly defined by that style, and in that both bands were clearly fucking pissed off. The venom here comes not only from the vocals (which are mean as hell, with bleak lyrics to match) but the frantic delivery of the riffs, the super-aggressive drumming and even their

choice of samples. "Grinds to a Halt" has one of the darkest vibes of any punk song I've heard this year. Ugly, angry music for ugly, angry times. (AU)
(Kink)

DIRECT HIT! – "Domesplitter" CD
This is a re-release on Fat of this band's first full-length, which was a collection of early EP tracks. I picked up the original at a show but apparently it was a bit limited. No additional tracks here but everything this band has done has been top-notch pop punk. This plays like a good LP and not an uneven compilation. Great sing-a-long pop punk à la DILLINGER FOUR, the COPYRIGHTS, and early RED CITY RADIO. Modern pop punk done right! (RL)
(Fat Wreck)

DISVEIN – "Dejected" EP
This one is a pretty damn good crusty ripper out of San Jose, California. They've got a bit of a DISRUPT thing going on, but with more variance, and depth of sound. It's like they throw in a little melody, a touch of grind, and tad of black metal, but throughout it all they never stop crusting. They also throw in some belching bullfrog vocals that really push this over the top. If you are wearing a faded baseball cap adorned with parts from Bic lighters, then this one is for you. (BA)
(self-released)

DORORO – "Sandstorm Bringer" CD
DORORO is an Osaka-based punk / metal group and this release finds them delving into a world of crossover and straight up butt rock metal. Sometimes there are some stabs at completely unforgiveable rap rock with wanky wah-wah solos. Gruff vocals bark you at about how this shitty world is doomed beyond repair. Woof. (GH)
(MCR)

DS-13 – "Last Mosh For Charlie: Live In Umeå Hard Core" LP
Live recording of a practice space gig from 2015 documenting the intensity of this Swedish hardcore band, technical difficulties and all. I remember them touring a good amount in the late '90s / early '00s and having records on Havoc, among many other labels. However, I don't think I ever saw them live, which is too bad, since that sounds like the way to experience them. With little to no nostalgia here, I'll say that this is a cool documentation of the band, raw and in their element, crowd going wild and grabbing the mic to scream along. This thrashes and rips. It's sixteen songs in twenty-two minutes, with several covers, including "Ready To Fight" by NEGATIVE APPROACH. Neat, heartfelt liner notes from Dennis Lyxzen of the Umea Hardcore label, who apparently released the first REFUSED demo. Includes download not only of the tunes but also the live video from the gig. Three cheers for DEMON SYSTEM 13. (JC)
(Rotten To The Core)

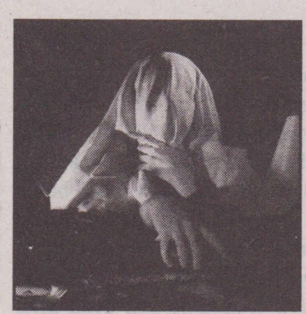
DAVEY DYNAMITE AND FRIENDS – "Holy Shit" LP
DAVEY DYNAMITE resists the urge of most punk singer-songwriters to become an overly self-important, exaggerated emotion fountain with two acoustic chords and no variation. The screams, the whispers, and the growls read authentic, his lyrics are fresh, and his backing band matches his intensity perfectly. I got a little nervous during the first 20 seconds of "380 Times" when he started to sound like a B-side from JUSTIN SANE's lackluster solo work, right before he made a harsh return to solid punk rock'n'roll. This LP provides the listener with eleven sharply written tunes for foot stompin' and arm flailin'. Rock on, Chicago. (RH)
(Don't Panic)

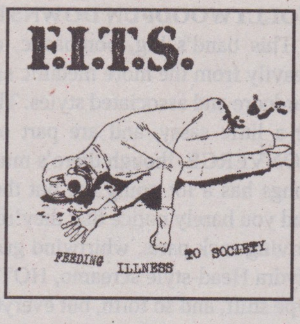
EASY HABITS – "Party King / White Bread"
I happen to love this sort of thing, but I think I also recognize that it's neither terribly original, nor terribly interesting. Is that a horrible thing to say? I don't think so. This is up-tempo, fairly catchy rock'n'roll performed by a bunch of guys who probably grew up on a steady diet of really good music, including a bunch of punk. There are a few "whoo-hoo-hoo"s and it's got great energy. I'll bet these guys are also great live. If, like me, you're a fan of MEAN JEANS, you should like this. (KK)
(Goodland)

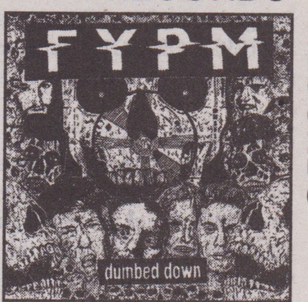
THE ESCALATOR HATERS – LP
This is another one of those records that probably isn't going to win an award for "Most Innovative New Artist." They do a very good job playing very catchy pop punk songs, with an almost Oi! flavor to it. This isn't gooey, sweet pop punk. No, it's got vocals that don't really approach "singing" and plenty of grinding guitar. (KK)
(Wanda)

EUREKA CALIFORNIA – "Wigwam" EP
Punk two-piece with a thick fuzzed out '90s KICKING GIANT sound. They also cover SUPERCHUNK's "Slack Motherfucker" and it's fine by me. (CR)
(Happy Happy Birthday to Me)

EXIT STANCE – "Saying Nothing But Speaking My Mind" 12"
I've always considered EXIT STANCE's 12" on Mortarhate to be one of the standout records of the era. Rather than a full-on reunion album, this 12" contains five tracks that apparently were never finished back in '85 and were finally recorded during their reformation back in '04. The opening track is immediately reminiscent of their older material, with the thick wall of bass rumble, chunky guitar, and AMEBIX-like rhythms. "Whole World Blind" borrows the guitar lead from CRUCIFIX's "Steelcase Enclosure" for the verse. Call it a rip-off or call it homage; it sounds really good and fitting for their sound. The recording is pretty raw but isn't lacking in any way. Those who dig the darker and heavier side of the '80s anarcho stuff like AMEBIX and ZYGOTE, or even CRESS, will definitely enjoy this worthwhile document. (MA)
(Imminent Destruction)







EXTREME NOISE TERROR / REALITY CRISIS – "Daily Holocaust" CD

Three (all new, so far as I can ascertain) tracks a piece from these UK veterans,and their Japanese progeny. The twin vocalist (one howling, one growling) thrash / punk / metal was never my cup of tea, but if floats your boat, then all boats will continue to rise (or at least not take on too much water) with this short effort. (RK)
(MCR)

FATIGUE – "Scab" EP

FATIGUE (ex-OUR TURN) offer up some aggressive yet catchy Oi!-influenced hardcore. The simple, mostly-original riffs hit the spot, the guitar has exactly the right amount of jangle, and Carl's vocals make me think of the early FUCKED UP singles. It's a little hard to hear the drums, but the predominant snare actually adds an interesting element. (DG)
(Warthog Speak)

FEMME KRAWALL – "Fun Im All" 10" EP

This German garage pop punk band is like a nice version of the NO TALENTS or VAGEENAS. There's even an enclosed photo of them posed on a sofa smiling in matching white t-shirts with a nice yellow dog looking all…fucking nice. Niceties aside, some of the songs have some bite like "Pygmalion Effekt" and "Ohne Worte," which shows some love for BABES IN TOYLAND. The musicianship is great. The hooks are there. They're a nice band to take your little sister to. (RO)
(Spastic Fantastic)

FILTH – "Live At Gilman Feb 28 1992."LP

Look…I love FILTH. How many times have I screamed *"one word is all I need—that word is* hate*!!"* in my adult life? A lot. A lot of times. So yeah, I was pretty juiced when I saw this banger in my pile—and a benefit for Berkeley Needle Exchange? Even better! (The show documented was a benefit for the same organization, which is fitting). Then I listened to the record. Picture the worst soundboard recording you can imagine, rendering a band you love completely unlistenable… because that's what this is. They state plainly in the liner notes that "the audio is far from perfect," but that barely scratches the surface. Fuck man, I really wanted this to be good. (WN)
(self-released)

F.I.T.S. – "Feeding Illness to Society" EP

These Montreal miscreants crank out six songs of fairly straightforward but absolutely relentless hardcore punk. The often-frenzied riffing is never anything less than airtight, the 1-2-1-2 drumming only lets up occasionally, and the two vocalists—one a little scummier than the other, but both certified freaks I'm sure—command your attention the whole way through, even when you're starting to fade due to relative lack of hooks. The rough, booming recording fits the music well, and suggests that their live set is a blast. (DG)
(Blow Blood)

FOTZEN POWER GERMANY – "You Don't Make Me Proud!" EP

The title track is a modern day BÄRCHEN UND DIE MILCHBUBIES! Then there's a more falling apart KLEENEX attack and the last song will make you submit your uterus into space! It's CRASS played backwards at the wrong speed with the lyrics taken from a lovelorn newspaper advice column. Amazing Berlin punk created by three women that fans of HANS-A-PLAST will get high from. What is the point of human existence but to create 45s that blow hearts and minds!? (LG)
(Verboten In Deutschland)

FUCK YOU PAY ME – "Dumbed Down" LP

Let me share with you, dear reader, the opening words to this release: *"Next in line to play the game / don't you know you're so damn lame / who are you to fucking judge / shit for brains, fucking dud"* …and the shit only gets better from there. This is take-no-prisoners relentless fast hardcore with no pretense and no bullshit. The lyrics are every bit as real as the mania, and when the solo drops in "Saint Dorner," right after Erba screams, *"The spoon will only tell you lies"*? Well, when that happens, young punk, this old man is a fukkn believer. This one is gold. File under *mandatory*. (WN)
(Tankcrimes)

GOWL – "Voltage Drop" EP

Disgusting grind violence from Connecticut. In the classic traditions of the '90s (think Fetus Records, DISSENSION), these kids annihilate nine movements thinly disguised as songs, and leave you with nothing more than wasted dreams and a jaw begging to be scraped off of the floor. Absolutely fucking relentless, absolutely fucking terrifying. I am extremely happy to have these sounds in my earholes. (WN)
(self-released)

THE GRABOWSKIS – "Sicher In Die Zukunft" LP

German melodic punk that is giving me a feeling of '90s-style Epitaph releases. Lots of single-string, poppy guitar hooks, gang backup vocals, and chunky riffs. The lead vocals have a rasp that fall somewhere in the space between SOCIAL DISTORTION and STIFF LITTLE FINGERS. It's catchy, political, and well-executed, but it just sounds too much like the '90s for me to stay focused. (GH)
(Kloppstock)

GRAND LORD HIGH MASTER – 2xLP

Utterly forgettable angst-ridden bro hardcore from Southern California. Heavy grooves, unnecessarily complicated beats (this ain't Guitar Center), and oh-so-calculated heaviness all masking as some kind of hardcore. It's not hardcore. It's butt rock for the new millennium. (WN)
(Kill All Music)

GRIT – "Concrete Sea" EP

Palatable, straightforward modern Oi! / pop punk from Dublin. GRIT sounds something in the vein that would have come out on

Dangerhouse, but definitely has some modern pop punk licks. Think FOREIGN OBJECTS, but more rigid. (CR)
(Contraszt! / Distroy / Ultra Peace / Visions of Warning)

HÄRDA UT – "Same" LP
Down-tuned hardcore that sounds like it draws from both turn of the millennium crust and some of the more recent East Coast oom-pah beat bands. Thick, mangled guitars belt out bleak and angry riffs, and the musical force is worth the few notches of speed for which they're traded in. The chilling, high-pitched vocalist sounds like revenge personified, and her screams contrast well with the otherwise low-end sonic aesthetic. (DG)
(Adagio830)

HARHAT – "Henkinen Ydintuho" EP
Furious Finnish crust! This really shines when it goes straight-up D-beat, like on the track "Kansanmurha." Perhaps it's the famed Brazil / Finland connection influencing my thinking, but this definitely has an early BESTHÖVEN vibe in places, with a similarly ramshackle recording and manic approach. "Pullon Varjossa" slows things down to CHAOS UK speed to great effect as well, offering a pogo-able song with vitriol fully intact. Unlike a lot of records, this one is back-loaded, with the quality steadily rising throughout. The recording is a bit on the quiet side, and the super-generic cover art does the band no favors, but this is definitely a killer slab of old school '90s-style crust. (AU)
(Imminent Destruction / Psychedelica)

HEATER – "Reaching for Things Unknown" EP
A little hardcore, a little pop punk, a little emo, a little messy. The A-side has two songs that are a bit in the vein of HOT WATER MUSIC. It has some of that Revolution Summer feel but through a pop punk filter. Sort of catchy songs with gruff vocals that are sung enough for you to be able to make out the lyrics and sing along to, if you are so inclined. The B-side is a little more hardcore. It's heavier, with more screaming and so on, but not terribly different. It's not bad, they don't do anything wrong but they also don't do anything amazing that makes you say, "Yeah, that ruled". (PA)
(Twistworthy)

HENRY FONDA – "Front Antinational" LP
Here we have a one sided LP of some brutal, metallic grind out of Germany. The first part of this record is full of Victory Records-style chug-a-lugs, which turned me off a little bit, but about midway through they drop all that and just shred to the finish with a more crust inspired assault. Most of the lyrics are in German, but their included manifesto, and CRASS-inspired packaging tell me that they are probably radical in nature. The biggest selling point for me is that they have a song called "There is No Violence Like Powerviolence." That's what I'm talking about! (BA)
(Nerdcore)

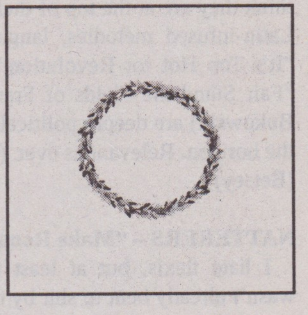
HOLLYWOODFUN DOWNSTAIRS – "Tetris" CD
This band's big, bombastic, abrasive, and complex sound draws heavily from the more metallic and arty sides of mid-to-late '90s post-hardcore and associated styles. The vocals are generally either screamy or a little sassy, and are part of the reason I'm reminded of early CONVERGE, though there's much more going on here. Each of these songs has a lot going on, but they're all extremely well put together and you barely notice that they're three or four minutes long. You have driving rock parts, whirlwind grind drumming, a few indie rock lulls, Hydra Head-style screamo, HOT SNAKES meets AT THE DRIVE IN type stuff, and so forth, but everything is more than the sum of its parts. I think of this stuff as being college kid music, but it's objectively quite good. (DG)
(Antena Krzyku)

LOS HUAYCOS – "Los First 3 Years" CD
A few demos collected on one CD suits these kids quite well. Dreary but aggressive punk with roots in '80s SoCal and abrasive South American raw punk. It's a good ass combination. The live shows are great, and it's far too easy to forget how well their recorded material translates. (WN)
(Cuaderno Rotto Producciones)

IPPS – "Life's A Mess" LP
Great and busted pop music from Columbus, Ohio, the Fertile Crescent for such sounds. *Life's A Mess* is all tough jangle, barbed wire hooks and hearty pessimism, aided by production that's too loud for lo-fi, but too fucked for professionalism. Lotsa lyrical vitriol to stew over here. Straighter than I remember NECROPOLIS being, but better too. Well worth a look-see. (MC)
(Superdreamer)

JETHRO SKULL – CD
I was all set to trash the fuck out of this for having the dumbest band name in recent history (and that says a lot with some of the dogshit I get for review). I think Andrew Underwood simply said, "That makes me angry" when I joyously shared this little gem with him, and "angry" is not a bad term to use when describing the musical merits of JETHRO SKULL. They are most obviously worshipers of the CONFEDERACY OF SCUM, but they add a nice "new" element of doom to that overdone formula. Thundering blackened wah-wah drenched guitar over the obligatory growled deadpan COSMIC COMMANDER / MAD BROTHER WARD-style vocals make for a cheerful combination especially on "Hated" and "Momma." The sound is complete shit and I can't say I'm on board with lyrical content like in "Junkie Whore" but it's all done in the un-PC tradition of GG ALLIN (who is also covered here). Cheers to these Louisiana boys for a solid effort and pushing the envelope. (RO)
(Hated)

RECORDS



KICKER – "Rendered Obsolete" LP

Ah fuck, it's KICKER. Y'all know the drill—super-fun SUBHUMANS-influenced hardcore with charismatic vocals and hilarious lyrics delivered by a crew of total fucking lifers. These punx may be balding and smelly, but they'll still drink all your beer, make your band look like shit compared to them at the gig, and leave a song stuck in your head for months afterwards. Probably won't steal your date though! Under all the crust they'll still gentlemen. There are a couple of throwaway tracks on this thing (the dub track definitely doesn't work) but the brilliance of songs like "Full English," "Shit at Kicker," and the title track more than compensate. You might as well buy this record—if you don't get it, your old man will. (AU)
(Tankcrimes)

KITCHEN PEOPLE – "Trendoid" LP

Australian synth-heavy, frantic punk that has a little bit of an AUSMUTEANTS vibe, but less idiotic. The breakneck tempos and general hookiness of it also make me draw comparisons to early DICKIES. With song titles like "Psychedelic White People" and "PC Punx," you really long for a lyric sheet, but you're shit out of luck. Catchy throughout with hooks for days and plenty of tongue-in-cheek lyrics to keep you on your toes. (GH)
(Oops Baby)

KRIMEWATCH – "Machismo / New York Nightmare" flexi

Two new-ish tracks from New York's KRIMEWATCH, who deserve the hype they get—they play traditional pre-youth crew NYHC with unquestionable swagger, and they'd be right at home on a Big City Records compilation. I can't hang with the disposable format, though. These songs already appeared on a promo tape, just begging to get lost under a car seat. Why repress them onto a flexi? (SW)
(Boss Tuneage / Flexi Punk!)

THE LINECUTTERS – "Pirates of Suburbia" EP

Blasts of catchy punk rock and ska that sounds like it could have been taken out of a *Punk-O-Rama* comp from about 20 years ago. All the songs are pretty good and I'm sure these guys play cool live shows. Six songs and each one seems to be inspired by different '90s punk rock bands. Side A ends with "Comrade Marco" which sounds like it could be a DILLINGER FOUR song and side B starts with "Black Friday," with a ska-core vibe; it could have been inspired by CHOKING VICTIM. (DB)
(Slope)

THE MAD DOCTORS – "No Waves Just Sharks" LP

Sophomore LP from these East Coast carport haunters. While still clinging to the modern garage buoy of metallic fuzz, they manage to lace a B-movie schtick throughout the album, thus bridging the generation gap between shitty Burger children and shittier Ugly Things old folks. A small victory in tandem with mostly capable tunes, a few of which even hold interest beyond their 95-second durations. (MC)
(King Pizza)

ME FIRST AND THE GIMME GIMMES – "Rake It In: The Greatest Hits" CD

I'm guessing most folks reading this will at least be vaguely aware of this punk rock super-group and cover band extraordinaire. The main men from NOFX and LAGWAGON (along with lesser mortals from LAGWAGON and FOO FIGHTERS) back crooner Spike Slawson in a variety of genres, tackling a slew of songs and styles that anyone with the slightest knowledge of popular culture will be somewhat familiar with. Aficionados of punk rock will recognize the snippets of original punk anthems that they slip into such standards as "The Times They are A-Changing," "Country Roads," "Desperado," and "San Francisco." Seventeen tracks culled from many of their seven LPs and numerous 7" efforts. Anyone that mixes 45 GRAVE into "Straight Up" is more than fine by me. (RK)
(Fat Wreck)

MOLAR – "Ring" EP

MOLAR remind me of early SLEATER-KINNEY, if they had stayed punk and maybe even gotten more post-hardcore rather than boring NPR-core? It's that chopped-up, wild, uncontainable sound of women making their own punk idea, combining a post-punk austerity with a melodic punk style. The vocals are tough and cool all at once; they make me think of ES, who are also from London, but MOLAR is doing a totally different thing musically. This has really got a post-hardcore and a post-punk drive that is interesting and cool and worth investigation. Plus the SLANT 6 cover! (LG)
(Everything Sucks)

MUTANT ITCH / VIDEO FILTH – split EP

Straight from the sun-baked hellscape of Fresno, California, MUTANT ITCH are still here to fuck with your head, offering up two tracks of fukked noize-core with everything turned up to eleven. The stomping "Goodby Fuckin Punks" is definitely the hit on their side, buoyed by a super-catchy bass line and the inimitable mental patient vocals. VIDEO FILTH are a bit more straightforward (but just a bit!), offering up three tracks of gnarly Boston crust with tons of phaser effects and guttural vocals delivered at a frantic pace. As if the top-notch work by two of the best newer bands going wasn't enough of an enticement, the EP also features some of the best punkers vs. cops cartoon artwork since the SHITLICKERS EP, or at least the *Start a Riot* comp. (AU)
(Dark Raids / Total Fucker)

MYDOLLS – "It's Too Hot For Revolution" LP

MYDOLLS have a rich, decades-long history in punk. They were active from 1978 to 1986 in the Houston punk and art scene, with a smattering of releases (CIA Records / Sub Pop), and then reformed in 2008. They are still comprised of their original members Trish Herrera, George Reyes, Dianna Ray, and Linda Younger, but as some of you may remember, Kathy Johnston passed in 2011. "Echo," which was recorded in 1985, is the only song on this release with Johnston on guitar, while "Don't Fucking Die" (I believe) is an ode to her. I still

think they are at the top of their game with their intricate songwriting, Latin-infused melodies, languid post-punk guitar, and tribal beats. "It's Too Hot for Revolution," "Politician," "Walls of Tunisia," and "Fair Stand the Fields of France" (which features lyrics by Charles Bukowski) are deeply political with the ever-present echoes of war on the horizon. Relevant as ever. (CR)
(Betsey)

NATTERERS – "Make Room! Make Room!" flexi
I hate flexis, but at least this one has good sound quality and wasn't already bent to shit by the time it got to us. NATTERERS play straightforward, aggressive, catchy punk that is a little too angry to be classified as "melodic", but it's teetering right on that edge. Good shit. This was originally released last year as a demo tape. (GH)
(Boss Tuneage / Flexi Punk!)

NERVE QUAKES – "A New State" LP
Post-punk near perfection. Soulful yet poppy vocals that remind me a little of the MARCH VIOLETS and a lot of fellow Aussies NERVOUS TREND. Layers of melodic guitar are paired with sharp and fascinating lyrics, such as the song "Shirley" that had me digging into Perth history and the life of Shirley Finn, a sex worker and mother of three who was most likely murdered by cops in 1975. "Threads" was my favorite track, with its witchy, hypnotic refrain "*under, under*." NERVE QUAKES are talented sirens drawing us into their depths and I'm happy to follow. (AB)
(Imminent Destruction)

NEW FRUSTRATIONS – "Dee Bacle" CD
This Boston-ish band formed in 2006 with members of the JOHNNIES, who I liked. This combo dishes out some cool mod-meets-power pop on this four song release. I'm hearing some PLIMSOULS, the CHORDS, and even the '60s side of the REAL KIDS at times. A solid intro to this band for me. (RL)
(self-released)

NEW ROCKET UNION – CD
Being the prejudiced old wanker that I (occasionally) am, I was prepared to instantly dislike this disc, which is just drums and guitar (and vocals), with the odd bit of sax thrown in. Fortunately, for all concerned, I quickly discovered that it's actually really good! Very full-sounding, in that (deliberately) garage-y way. Kind of like the early RAMONES covering the LAZY COWGIRLS' greatest hits. (RK)
(Ruzicka)

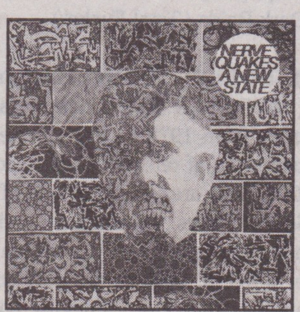
NEWTOWN NEUROTICS – "Pissed as A Newt" LP
This is the first vinyl pressing of the NEUROTICS's 1982 live cassette, initially released between their 1980 demo and 1983's *Beggars Can Be Choosers* LP. It showcases early live versions of songs from their first few singles as well as stuff from the first demo tape. If you've never heard these guys, go take a long visit with their first LP and get back to me. They play RAMONES-style (that's oversimplifying it) 4/4 punk with Steve Drewett's unmistakable voice belting out biting political and tongue-in-cheek diatribes. These live tracks are good and energetic...great audience sing-a-longs and all that...but I would start with their studio tracks if you're not already a fan. Still, decent sound quality, with better packaging and more fun than a lot of live releases out there. (GH)
(No Plan)

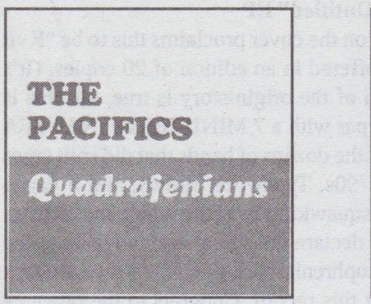
NURSE – "Foreign Object" EP
Another winner from Scavenger of Death. NURSE have an interesting hardcore style with mostly gloomy and dissonant guitar work that contrasts with the primarily oom-pah drumming and the most guttural, tortured, throat-shredding vocals (they rival DYSTOPIA in delivery). It all makes for an interesting and somewhat paradoxical sound. "Foreign Object" is the first track and the record's lone D-beater, with a saturated, knife-piercing guitar tone. While I wish the whole record was in that vein, I'm in no way disappointed with what's here. (DG)
(Scavenger of Death)

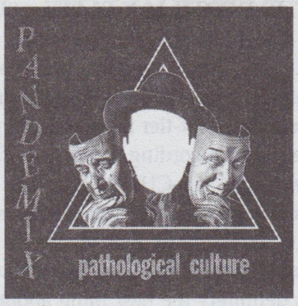
OBSTRUCTION – "Pressure Breaks" flexi
Fast and feisty hardcore punk the way the kids are delivering it these days: bulbous, booming, bombastic. Hard to describe exactly how perfectly these mutants nail it on the demo-cum-flexi, but *daaaaaamn* the drums in "Salvation" are just fukkn perfect. Beat changes for just one pass through a riff while the rest of the band still burns? Yeah, this is what I want. You got that midpaced creepy crawl-inducing "POC" and then you flip it over and...well, there's nothing on the other side. You want the other four songs listed on the cover? I guess you gotta grip the tape. For real though, total banger here—looking forward to more sounds. (WN)
(Boss Tuneage / Flexi Punk!)

OUT OF ORDER – "Stuck In The Mud" CD
From Montreal, this is modern Oi! / street punk à la OXYMORON and the FORGOTTEN as opposed to the slower UK82 sound. This is pretty good if this is your genre. There has been a lot of street punk out there over the last 20 years. Lots of chanting choruses to go with the gravelly lead vocals. Pretty up-tempo and tight on the music side. Decent. (RL)
(Randale)

THE OUTTA SORTS – "The Trouble With Love" EP
The first song has something in common with the KINKS' "You Really Got Me." It's just the cadence of the delivery of the vocals, but it's kind of distracting. I'll get over it. Other times it's got a LOVE AND ROCKETS feel. More than either of those things, though, this is pretty straightforward rock'n'roll. It's not fancy, but it's got guitar and bass and drums and it's pretty well done. It really has kind of a classic sound. I like it. (KK)
(self-released)







THE PACIFICS – "Quadrafenians" EP

This is what it's about. This is trashy rock'n'roll that makes no pretense about being cool or hip. It's just a bunch of kids grabbing their instruments and belting out one excellent song after another. They start off with a quirky / catchy kind of pop song, featuring very '60s feeling guitar work. It really sets the stage for the others: garage-y, poppy, catchy, and possibly a little out of control. Imagine CHUCK BERRY meets GENTLEMAN JESSE. There you go. Look at you. (A couple of these dudes look like a couple of the dudes in THE #1s. Odd.) (KK)
(Mistkäfer)

PANDEMIX – "Pathological Culture" flexi

Fitting music for the contemporary American malaise—PANDEMIX deliver dynamic mid-tempo and slowed-down hardcore from Boston. Channeling a variety of influences, to me they exude an early '80s LA hardcore and SST vibe. Looking for current acrimonious and intelligent hardcore punk that's not "tough-guy"? This is your jam. The packaging includes well thought-out lyrics and original artwork. Not a huge fan of the flexi medium, but I suppose when it gets worn down thin, there's always the digital afterlife. (LT)
(Boss Tuneage / Flexi Punk!)

PARDON US – "Goodnight Adam 12" EP

Three Liverpool punks, self-described as "mild-mannered / severely polite," released a tight, friendly EP. You can feel the nice conversation you'd have after they finished playing. It's a nice soundtrack to beer drinking at a backyard show. (RH)
(Everything Sucks)

PINK MUSCLES – "The Signal" CD

Whoa man…This one is a real trippy hardcore mind melt. Like bad trippy, but in a good way. Like a "when is this shit going to wear off?" kind of freak out. They ooze through styles, from damaged thrash to borderline krautrock, with the overall fucked up vibe of FLIPPER. They're also angry and unpretentious and will bring back memories of good times gone awry. Crank it up, and get warped! (BA)
(self-released)

PISS TEST – 12"

Certain parts of the punk canon will never ever die, and the sounds of Southern California in the early 1980s are certainly an aspect that will live on. Hence, PISS TEST. Take the basic structure of the ADOLESCENTS and early, less melodic DESCENDENTS, mix just a hint of Jello Biafra's theatrical vocal delivery, and refine the rhythms down to just *Is This Real?* and *Youth of America* and you have their new 12". The songs are all about lefty politics and the degradation of modern life. It's fast, it's fun, it's over before you get tired of it. Capital-P Punk. (LP)
(Dirt Cult)

PLAYBOY – "Celebration" 12"

Negative Jazz keeps up their track record of perfectly deranged punk music with this collection of extremely sick FLIPPER-isms from Montreal. The record leads off with a track called "The Traffic," which takes a plodding repetitive bass line and buries it behind a low frequency wind tunnel hum and occasional synth pads out of *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, with stabs of what sounds like a couple clarinets or a soprano saxophone in an almost CHARLES MINGUS or ORNETTE COLEMAN arrangement. The repetitive and discordant core of these tracks belies the coordination that drives them, the whiplash-like way the band will cut a bar short and get right back into the beginning of the riff. Hopefully that doesn't make this sound like a super technical band: rather it seems like a group of people who are all staring intently at a point on the floor, looking at a flower and really hating it. Genius music that I want to dance to, god willing they consider playing live in our part of the world. Highly recommended for those who like to move their body to twisted and ugly sounds. (EW)
(Negative Jazz)

POISON BOYS – "Bad Mouth" EP

DMZ / PAGANS cock-sucking worshipers from Chi Town tear it up here with their second stab at vinyl. It's a pretty good whirl if not a real brain surgery attempt at originality, especially on the title track with its DENIZ TEK ripping guitar leads. It won't get you to kill a cop or anything, but it's well worth a listen. (RO)
(No Front Teeth)

POISON BOYS – "Headed for Disaster" EP

NEW YORK DOLLS worship out of Chicago. Not as catchy as the HEARTBREAKERS, and they successively rhyme dance, trance, chance and ro-mance, which drives me a little crazy, but I don't hate it. Fans of PERSONAL AND THE PIZZAS and NANCY punk'n'roll will feel right at home. If you like your 45s greasy with extra sleaze, this one's for you. (AB)
(No Front Teeth)

POLITICAL CRAP – "Slow Death" EP

Jeez, I wonder if they'll ever run out of unreleased golden age punk to release. You might recognize the name POLITICAL CRAP from the infamous SoCal *Who Cares* comp. Or maybe you knew it was an early Duane Peters vehicle. I don't think I realized that. "Slow Death" is classic SoCal hardcore bonz; Duane sounds like a dead ringer for Keith Morris here. "On Yer Own" is a beach punk grinder; here Duane sounds like a dead ringer for Darby. "Rejected" rounds out the record. It didn't really bowl me over the first time, but it's a real nostalgic grower of a track, and probably what I'll be coming back for. This is a great EP, and may become the quintessential Duane I reach for. On red wax with dope skate punk inner sleeve. Glad this came into my life. (GB)
(Slope)

PROTEX – "Tightrope" LP

For my money, PROTEX are the absolute best early punk / power pop band outside of the UNDERTONES. When you're thanking STIFF LITTLE FINGERS for all their help in your liner notes you know you're doing something right! Tracks like "Don't Ring Me Up" and

"A Place in Your Heart" are underrated classics that sound fresh even today. And they're still a joy to watch live—when they played Asbury Lanes two years ago the crowd was begging for more. *Tightrope* is their first album in forever and it's solidly middle of the road, neither as great nor as terrible as you'd expect. The riffs themselves are excellent but the lyrics are pretty bland and forgettable, a result of grown men trying to recapture their teenage lust. The eponymous "Tightrope" is a dud, slipping into the pop side of power pop and sounding more like B-side BEACH BOYS than anything else. Other tracks, like "Even If I Wanted To" and "Without You," shine with their original brilliance, an impressive feat for a power pop band in 2017. There are flickers of something great here, but it never quite ignites for me. Worth picking up depending on how much of a PROTEX completist you are. (AB)
(Bachelor)

PROTEX – "Wonder Why / Night of Action"

Haha, was just talking about never-ending unreleased material, and now Teenadelic Records is throwing unreleased PROTEX singles at me?! WTF!! Recorded in 1979, just after they'd relocated to London but prior to the recently uncovered *Strange Obsessions* LP, these are two more unheard UK pop gems. When I think of PROTEX I tend to think of something a bit speedier and riffier, but here they're going all out for pop, something like the ONLY ONES or the BUZZCOCKS slowed down on 'ludes. It's hard to top the LP for me, but for PROTEX fanatics, I suspect the more the merrier. (GB)
(Teenadelic)

R.A.S. – "Pas Le Temps De Regretter" CD

R.A.S. were a Oi! band back in the early '80s in *la belle* France. These days I guess it'd be called street punk. Back in the day, they obviously listened to a lot of 4-SKINS and COCK SPARRER. This is five tracks from their "glory" days (1982-1984) that were never recorded but were finally given the studio treatment in 2015. They're paired with a tribute record *Hommages 1982-1984*, originally released in 2000, with ten luminaries at that time (the TEMPLARS, USUAL SUSPECTS, GUNDOG, the BULLDOGS et al) covering some of their classics. The songs don't suffer in the least from the modern production sounds. I don't remember them sounding this good, but then again my memories of those heady times are pretty hazy at this point. (RK)
(Contra)

RATHAUS – "Rathaus Rathaus Rathaus" 12"

I'm reviewing two one-sided 12" records this month? Come on, people! Watch out spiky punx, RATHAUS are giving you a run for your money in the noise punk department. It's like a barely more coherent version of the first MEAT PUPPETS EP mixed with MELT BANANA and the dissonance of Vancouver's LIÉ. Four totally blazing and damaged cuts you can both pogo and spazz out to, rounded out with one arty / crawly closing track. Great stuff. (MA)
(A Wicked Company)

THE REPTILIAN ELITE – "Untitled" EP

I feel fucked with. The sticker on the cover proclaims this to be "Kvlt Russian noisecore from 1997" offered in an edition of 20 copies. (It's actually 30.) No idea how much of the origin story is true, but this is definitely shit-tier noisecore, on par with a 7 MINUTES OF NAUSEA rehearsal recording or any one of the dozens of bands that did split tapes with DECHE-CHARGE in the '90s. Typewriter drums, and a vague hint of guitar with high-pitched squawking over the whole mess. Even a connoisseur of the style would declare this "fine" and move on to the next record in the pile. The schizophrenic-with-a-Kinko's-card artwork is definitely the best thing about this record. Congrats to the other 29 freaks who got a copy. It's not great, but damn is it rare, wherever the hell it came from. (AU)
(Tru Freak)

RUBBLE – "The Image" EP

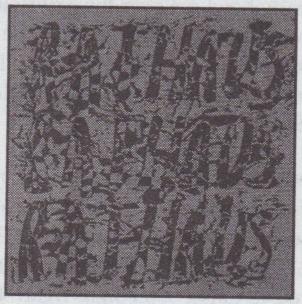
Three song debut EP from Portland's RUBBLE, who are capable Riot City worshippers. "The Image" is a real burner of an opener, with a bubbly bass riff and shouted vocals. The other two tracks slow it down a bit, and neither does much for me. The packaging is classically cool, with photos of the band standing among rubble and in a cave, circled As, and a nice dose of Olde English font. If you've exhausted your EXPELLED and VICE SQUAD records and like a rawer sound for your modern UK82, give RUBBLE a shot. (SW)
(Distort Reality)

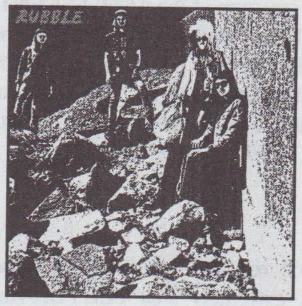
SHOCKIN' T.V. / TIRATURA LIMITATA – split EP

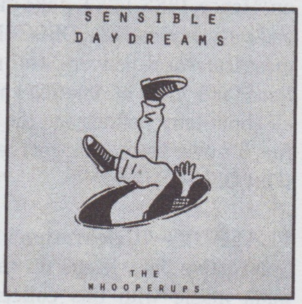
Usually I'm a puritan about reissues adhering to the original format, but this hard-to-find split EP from 1983 would really benefit from having been issued as an LP instead of a 7". It clocks in at 18 minutes total (!) and the TIRATURA LIMITATA side suffers from poor sound quality. It's too bad, because TIRATURA LIMITATA is a cool, mellow punky Oi! band, more restrained than their countrymen NABAT and ROUGH but equally anthemic. Even their ska song isn't bad! SHOCKIN' T.V. play thrashy hardcore with loud bass riffing up front in the mix. They're a little generic, even for the time. At times, they remind me of the PARTISANS quite a bit, though the rapid-fire Italian vocals bring to mind WRETCHED. Cool reissue of an obscure early Italian record—I just wish the TIRATURA LIMITATA tracks sounded a little better! (SW)
(No Plan)

SIDA – LP

They're leaning on the chorus pedal here, dragging it into a NO TREND or SCRATCH ACID context. This is pummeling and the unhinged vocals are commanding and crazed (the singer has an excellent solo project called THEOREME). There are songs here, but it sounds like they are ripping or maybe just tumbling apart with a constant feeling of increasing speed. Pretty chaotic but in the end some driving rock songs with a strong freak tendency. (MM)
(Le Turc Mecanique / Mon Cul C'est du Tofu / Population)







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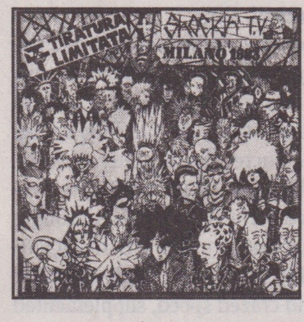
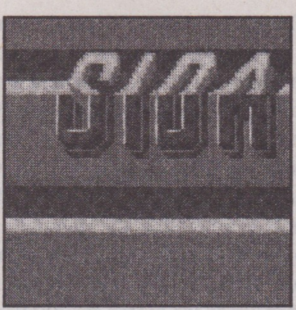
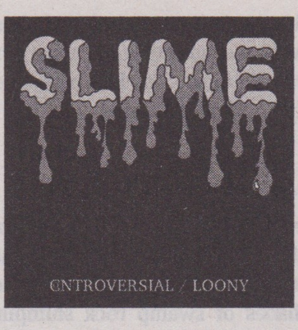






SLIME – "Controversial / Loony"

Wow, you learn something new every day! I've seen this 1978 UK punker littering the bins for years. Little did I know it features SLIMY TOAD from my favorite UK punk outfit JOHNNY MOPED. In 20 years, I can't say I've ever really heard someone name-check this 45, which is usually a sign of mediocrity. Listening now, I'd say it's a bit plodding and smarmy, a tongue-in-cheek outtake that wouldn't be out of place on a JOHNNY MOPED LP or the heavily panned second DAMNED LP, meaning that in 2017 it's actually pretty ripe for reissue (because we've already heard all that other stuff by now). On beauteous green vinyl (GB)
(Damaged Goods)

SONGS FOR MOMS – "Rivers" 12"

I've been watching SONGS FOR MOMS hone their style in Bay Area warehouses for the better part of ten years and I still can't tell you exactly what they're doing, but I completely love it. Nimble fingers dance all over their guitar necks, elongating dreamy riffs into an oblivion that takes their drummer into time signatures I've never even dreamed of. Still, they sing songs of longing, love, and violence that tie it all together and make them one of the catchiest bands I know of in San Francisco. Everyone thought they had broken up after the release of their last LP in 2009, but they regrouped to record these five unreleased songs with absolutely no loss of steam or continuity. This record is beautiful, essential, and perfect. (GH)
(Rumbletowne)

SPAZZ – "Sweatin' II: Deported Live Gorilla" CD

In their short, three week long existence, powerviolence grandpas SPAZZ wrote no less than 15,845 songs and this CD manages to collect 35 of them. This disc compiles their 1994 split LP with ROMANTIC GORILLA, a 1995 split CD with SUBVERSION, and a live set from KFJC radio. Aren't familiar with SPAZZ but love hardcore and powerviolence? What is wrong with you? SPAZZ is completely manic, unpredictable, and silly as fuck, but still have unfuckwithable riffs and insane energy in every song. Plus, what other hardcore band throws a banjo in the mix? Decent live recording too. (GH)
(Tankcrimes)

STATE FUNERAL – "Tory Party Prison" EP

Here is a sweet, bouncy, and macabre little flexi from a UK outfit who are conjuring '90s hardcore, '80s UK pogo, and anarcho-punk with deathrock tones. A lo-fi and raw recording that is nastier than its more politically earnest and poignant '80s influences. Themes include class control, war, police fascism, reveling, and revelation. (JR)
(Boss Tuneage / Flexi Punk!)

STATIC EYES – "The Thaw" EP

My kin is from Wisconsin, so when I see a band from there it either warms my heart or makes me want to kill. This band is in the former category and does a nice In The Red Records-style mix of surf guitar, hardcore, and dark swampy death jamming. "The Thaw" is the best offering here. Like the GUN CLUB, HALO OF FLIES, and NECESSARY EVILS, or something. Not their first ride on the punk train and hopefully not their last. (RO)
(Kitschy Manitou)

STREET EATERS – "The Envoy" LP

Well on their way to becoming an East Bay institution, this duo's latest vinyl contribution is a cool concept record based on the speculative fiction of Ursula K. Le Guin, although it is also perfectly accessible to the uninitiated. It seems fitting that the very DIY STREET EATERS have even coined their own genre name ("Truewave"), as it's difficult to pinpoint their sound beyond the given of "punk." They are predominantly bass and drums, contributing to their unique sound. Taking a crack at some form of comparison: I hear a little '90s Ebullition mixed with straightforward '90s European punk like POST-REGIMENT or the contemporary SUICIDAS. This driving, originally conceived, well thought-out, and catchy punk concept definitely deserves your attention. (LT)
(Nervous Intent)

SUBMACHINE – "People" EP

I never knew too much about this band aside from a friend putting their song "Big Eye" on a mixtape (which I liked), and that they had a split with FILTH (*This Is Why We Are The Drunks*). Well, this EP showed up for review and I now know that they're from Pittsburgh and have been playing and releasing records somewhat consistently since the early '90s. Their latest gives us three straightforward punk bangers with gruff vocals, cool bass lines, and solid drumming. This reminds me a lot of CAUSTIC CHRIST, also from Pittsburgh. All in all, a solid record from these hardcore veterans. (JC)
(Frog Manchu)

SUICIDE BID – "This Could Be… The Final Chapter" EP

SUICIDE BID is a musical collective from the UK that was around from 2003 to 2013. The EP starts with a reggae song and it kind of gives off the impression that the rest of this release is going to be just like this—slow, chill, and melodic with dub-like echos, but the second track "Ghost of St Agnes" picks up and is more of an upbeat ska song that sounds like the CLASH, both vocally and musically. Side B opens with "The Final Chapter" which is a catchy and energetic two-tone ska song with a really good vocalist. Apparently the four tracks on this EP consist of 22 different players and vocalists from a variety of UK DIY bands. (DB)
(Runnin' Feart)

SUN BATHER – 12"

Four-track one-sider from an American / Danish / German project with a long resume of well-known past bands. They've got sort of a SoCal beach punk / K-town blend going on, but it typically leans toward sounding more like the latter. "Faret Vild" could be a lost *Power Pearls* track, while the first two are pretty straight-on tunes with catchy choruses. "Shady Grove" is a cover of a traditional / DOC WATSON song. I don't

totally get what the deal with this band is, aside from some friends from different places getting together in some Hawaiian shirts to do what kind of appears to be a novelty record once a year or so. Side B is perfect for properly setting up the anti-skating on your turntable. (MA)
(Hjernespind)

TAIWAN HOUSING PROJECT – "Veblen Death Mask" LP
A messy swirl of guitars and noise with the drums and bass keeping to the ground and an overall death rock vibe. There is a saxophone that shows up here and there that is truly freaky. Maybe it gets a little theater cheese, and there are some weird shades of swamp rock slumping towards off-kilter repetition of bleak psychedelia. Imagine SIOUXSIE SIOUX fronting BUTTHOLE SURFERS. (MM)
(Kill Rock Stars)

TAMPON – "Planet Tampon" LP
The internet tells me that this Turkish band has been active for over twenty years, but *Planet Tampon* is their first vinyl offering. Classic US / UK-influenced punk....think '77 UK and lots of catchy early '90s US influences (I heard OPERATION IVY sneaking into the mix more than once) presented in mid-tempo glory with sneering and forceful female vocals. Perhaps this is more interesting as a document than as a musical release, but the band's theme song is worth the price of admission on its own, and fans of straight-up old school *punk rock* will be well chuffed. (WN)
(Prof Sny)

TEXAS MOD CRUSHERS – "Just for Kicks" CD
Bar band music as bad as their band name. (CR)
(Ace Corner Barber / Crusher Music)

TOTALOVE – "Lo Que Toco Lo Destruyo" flexi
A lot of demos get pressed to vinyl / flexi these days. Very rarely is that as deserved and important as in this case. While they hail from Mexico, TOTALOVE have a very Spanish sound, touching on bands like ÚLTIMO RESORTE and SILLA ELÉCTRICA, though with a more straightforward hardcore influence than either of those bands. Busy but controlled, with clear powerful vocals and well-written lyrics. Can't wait to hear more. It was easy to be dubious of Boss Tuneage's new project of pressing demos to flexis, but if they're all of this quality it's an easy win for the label. (AU)
(Boss Tuneage / Flexi Punk!)

TROPICAL TRASH – "Decisions' Empty Nest" EP
Heavy, harsh, and high quality noise rock from Cleveland. The A-side starts some beading twisted metal synth lines channeling the NORMAL funneled through the motorik drumming and apocalyptic guitar clang of SPRAY PAINT before some vocals echoing TUXEDOMOON's "No Tears" and with some additional layers of static hiss that gradually pile on. If you wanted more of that, good news—the track spans both sides. A good one sure to appeal to fans of stuff like MAYYORS or LOST SOUNDS or anything in between. (EW)
(Sophomore Lounge)

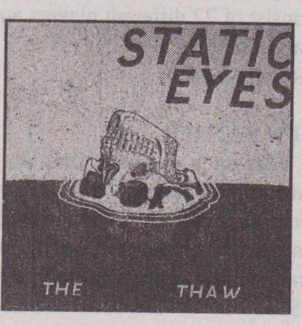
UPSET NOISE – "Disperazione Nervotica" EP
God fucking damnit '80s Italian hardcore is just the fucking best. The enormous prices commanded by the original releases by bands in this scene cry out for reissues, and No Plan has responded with a faithful and great-sounding reissue of one of the most crucial mid '80s Italian hardcore EPs. UPSET NOISE went mediocre thrash pretty quickly, but their early stuff (this EP and the split with WARFARE?) are top-shelf examples of the uniquely unhinged style Italian bands brought to the table at the time. This is most comparable to the NEGAZIONE side of the *Mucchio Selvaggio* split with DECLINO, with a similar intensity to the motor-mouthed vocals and crazed speed, supplemented by masterful bass playing and drumming that is somehow both frantic and incredibly precise. The last track hints at the bad stuff to come, but everything before it is absolutely essential hardcore fucking punk of the highest order. The art on the record looks like capital A Art, and the original insert is reproduced on full-on slick glossy paper as well. This is a flawless reissue that any punk would be proud to own. (AU)
(No Plan)

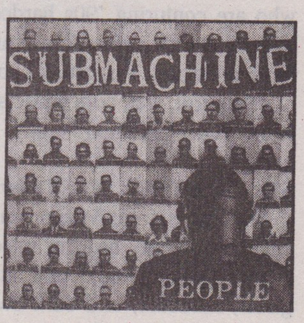
US WEEKLY – LP
Austin, Texas group that is reminiscent of CHRIS THOMSON bands (MONORCHID, etc.), perhaps because of the vocalist's sneer and the sorta CRAIG SCANLON guitar via a less macho SCRATCH ACID. A wired and paranoiac punk sound that will appeal to those who can't keep their eyes off the dime store paperback rack, consumed by pop cultured political disgust, minds that go through the sewage pipes under the Magic Kingdom and create scattershot pop dynamite for disgruntled punk types. Really liking this group. (LG)
(Nightmoves)

VÄGRA – "8 Tracks Demonstration 2016" 12"
Does the world need another raw punk demo pressed onto a one sided 12"? Clearly, the answer is yes. Bombastic, primitive D-beat punk—it's exactly what you think it is, and it's fucking brilliant. Choice cut is "Chemtrail" but they all rule. Hard. If you like to be pummeled relentlessly… (WN)
(Bloody Master)

THE VENOMOUS PINKS – "We Do It Better" CD
Highly produced and polished pop punk. Generic mix of GREEN DAY, RAMONES and BAD RELIGION. It's obvious that these ladies know how to play the shit out of their instruments, so kudos to that. It's too slick, it's boring. (CR)
(SquidHat)

WESTERN ADDICTION – "Tremulous" LP / CD
Supremely competent arena punk that appeals to the (smallish) part of me that reminisces about AVAIL in the '90s and wonders what (reluctant) AGAINST ME! fans must feel like. This is all to say that this record is super good. All buttons are pushed, and I hope that kids glom onto it and fall in love with it, and that I hope some of those kids use it as a launching pad to find more interesting music. But (and let me





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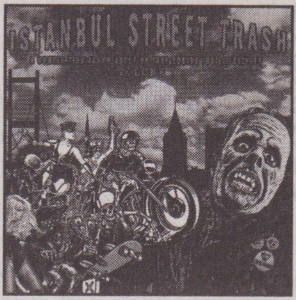

be clear), for those kids (and adults) who don't blast off—for the kids who stop at *Tremulous*—this record is fukkn great. Accessible punk should all be this good, seriously. Accessible punk is important. (WN)
(Fat Wreck)

WHIPPING POST – "Taste the Whip" flexi EP
Why? Why a flexi? The sound is so bad. They are so hard to play. They aren't cheap anymore. Anyway, it's hardcore. First listen, not super excited. Second listen, this ain't that bad. The A-side is three short ones, sort of BORN AGAINST in style. Straight forward mid- to up-tempo hardcore with some cool almost-wanky-but-not-really note bending. Vocals are gruff and forced but not over the top. The B-side is a bit of a let down. It's a slow dirge that is kind of cool musically at times, but the music along with the vocals tends to go a bit too far in terms of pooping on the record (just trying too hard to be heavy). It sure sounds like a demo that someone decided to put out on a flexi, but a pretty good one. (PA)
(Boss Tuneage / Flexi Punk!)

WHOOPERUPS – "Sensible Daydreams" EP
Fantastic fuzzed-out pop music from London. These three ladies are relentless with their melodic guitar hooks and harmonizing vocals. Completely addictive mid-paced songs that give you that floating on a cloud feeling. If you loved VERONICA FALLS or most stuff Slumberland Records put out, you will adore this record. Songs about love, loss, and self-understanding. So good! (FS)
(Everything Sucks)

WISHGIFT – LP
This fucking blows like those million SST records that people think are good now. Yes, punk is dead again and this is what killed it. Jazzy, noodling, self-indulgent whack-offs channeling MOJACK, VICTIMS FAMILY, and TOOL all rolled together in a blown-out load of infected semen. Suck me. Suck me hard, Greg Ginn. (RO)
(Lake Para Dise / Sophomore Lounge)

WOOD CHICKENS – "Skunk Ape" EP
Melodic, upbeat, and revved country punk (cow punk?) from Madison, Wisconsin. The second track is actually a cover of one of my favorite country songs, "Rolling In My Sweet Baby's Arms," so that's pretty cool but Buck Owens' version is definitely faster. These guys are good players and it's awesome that they can mix country and punk rock in a way that's not annoying like a lot of other bands that try to combine the two. The EP only has three songs, which I think is perfect for someone who's not really into this particular kind of punk but wants something a little different. (DB)
(Kitschy Manitou)

WRETCHED – "Libero e Selvaggio" 4x7" / LP
Released simultaneously, an LP and a 4x7" box set each collect four releases from Italian hardcore standard bearers WRETCHED. Included are the split EP with INDIGESTI, *In Nome Del Loro Potere Tutto E Stato Fatto* EP, *Finira Mai?* EP, and *In Controluce* EP. The LP has a gatefold cover crammed with photos of the band throughout the 1980s. The box set is more luxe, with four individual 7"s replicating the OGs (the INDIGESTI split only has the WRETCHED tracks) and a nice booklet with insert reproductions. The INDIGESTI split and first two EPs are godhead noise—I'd be shocked if any of WRETCHED's drummers ever had a drum rug, and the whole band sounds like they're being pelted by trash and bottles. The final EP is more polished (a band member is wearing a DOORS t-shirt!), but still worthwhile. If for some reason you've never heard WRETCHED, all of their records have been reissued and are available at a reasonable price—get on it! An absolutely essential band, truly as wild and free as this collection's title implies. (SW)
(Agipunk / Chaos Produzioni)

V/A – "Istanbul Street Trash: A Compilation Album About No Fake Posers Just Lifestyles, Volume 1" LP
A varied collection of bands from the contemporary Istanbul underground. Surf, stoner, alternative, grunge, street punk, hardcore, ska, garage, post-punk, and metal…none of the fourteen bands sound remotely alike. The quality is high throughout, in production and in execution. Standout tracks for me: TAMPON (thankfully not dude-fronted), the dark wave-y SHE PAST AWAY, the appropriately named the RAWS, and the closer by SECONDHAND UNDERPANTS. *"Total ninja power in my bra, I've got ninjas in my panties, my secondhand underpants, ninjas in my secondhand underpants!"* (MA)
(Prof Sny)

V/A – "Squidhat '77" CD
Back in the '90s reviewing comps was the worst. Twenty-five bands with two known bands doing one song on nearly every comp. I'm glad that trend died. This is a comp from Las Vegas of twenty-two bands I've never heard of (for the most part) doing songs from 1977 or close enough. Most are punk covers but some are pop music covers. Sort of like a poor man's *Punk Goes New Wave* or *Punk Goes Disco*. This is probably best for friends of the bands. I think comps died when Bandcamp and Soundcloud showed up to help expose new bands. This all sounds okay for what it is. (RL)
(SquidHat)

Adagio830: adagio830.de
Agipunk: agipunk.com
Antena Krzyku: antenakrzyku.pl
Autisto: Louisjucker.ch
Bad Hair Life: Finland, facebook.com/BadHairLifeRecords
Blame The Victim: Finland.
Bloody Matter: 10 N Main St., Gainesville, FL 32601, vagrapunk@gmail.com
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Negative Jazz: negativejazz.bigcartel.com
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Nervous Intent: nervousintent.com
New Frustrations: newfrustrations.com
Night Moves: nightmoveslabel.bandcamp.com
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Randale: randel-records.de
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Rotten To The Core: rtcrecords.com
Rumbletowne: rumbletowne.com
Ruzicka: newrocketunion1.bandcamp.com
Scavenger of Death: scavengerofdeathrecords.bandcamp.com
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Teenadelic: teenadelicrecords.bigcartel.com
Texas Mod Crushers: facebook.com/texasmodcrushers
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Twistworthy: twistworthy.com
Verboten In Deutschland: fotzenpowergermany.bandcamp.com
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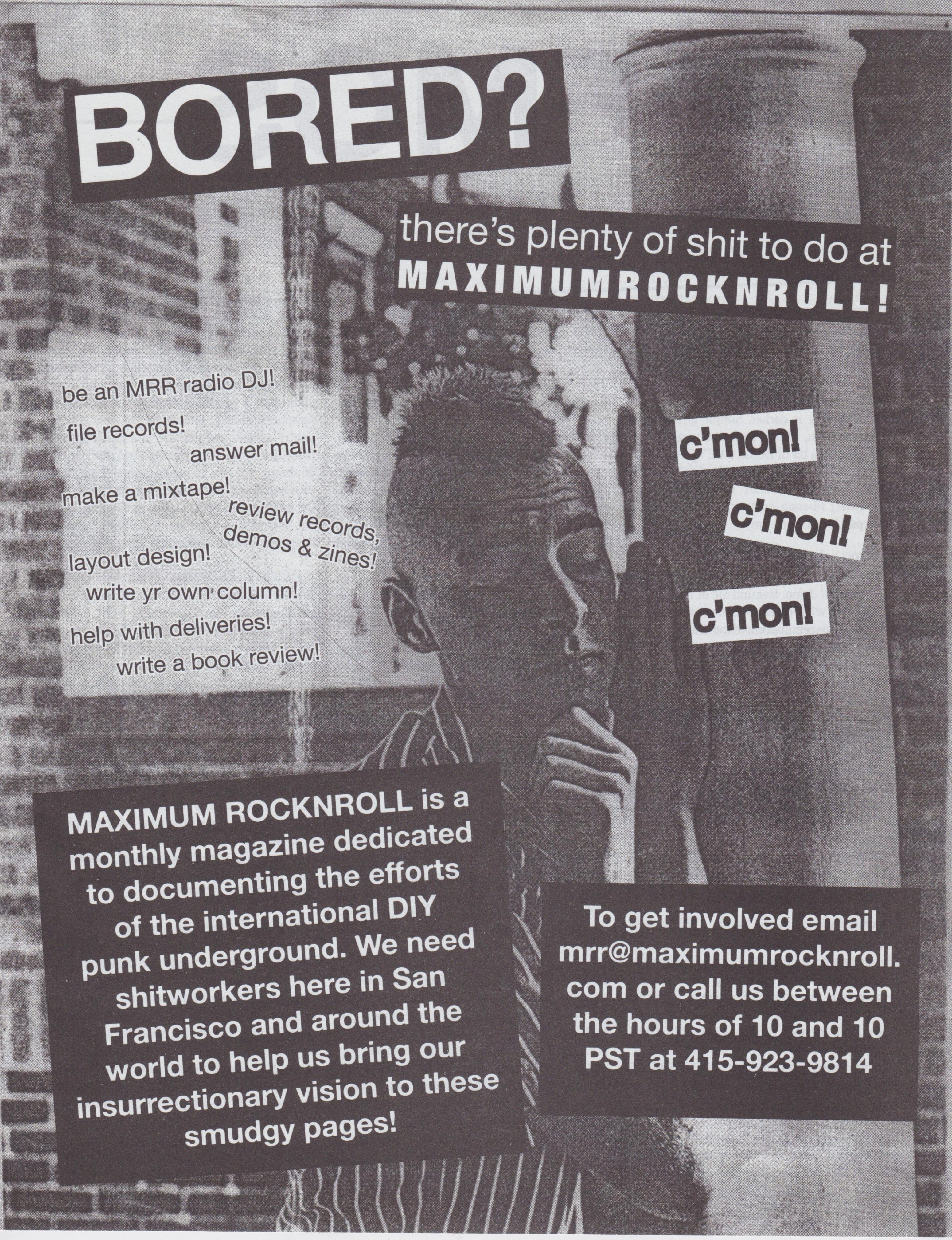
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DEMOS

All cassettes and CD-Rs are reviewed in this section. Send yours to PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146 USA and include your contact information. Submissions without artwork will not be considered.

(AT) Alex Turner
(BA) Mike Battleaxe
(GH) Greg Harvester
(HB) Heather Blotto
(JR) Jason Ryan
(JB) Julia Booz
(MA) Matt Badenhop
(MD) Michael de Toffoli
(WN) Robert Collins

ANTHER – *Dark Blooms* – A fitting title for a melancholic procession. Four women from Portland don't fit too neatly in any box, but post-punk and indie rock fans can definitely find something to like here. The songwriting and melodies have a pop sensibility to them but the overall tone is darker. Simple guitar leads are tempered in, adding an interesting texture. I'm reminded a bit of Berlin's LEVITATIONS, whose tape I reviewed a couple months back, though ANTHER sounds less bleak. Great stuff. (MA) (8-song cassette, lyrics included, antherpdx.bandcamp.com)

ASALTO – Holy hot shit new band alert—this Buenos Aires outfit *smokes* through ten tracks on their debut demo. Remind me of NEEDLES at times, but with lower pitched vocals and lots of open chords reminiscent of the '80s Midwest. There's a definite ear for infectious rock'n'roll that especially comes out on "Sangre" and the (excellent) WIRE cover that closes the demo. Best part? The fukkn thing repeats on the flip. This rules hard. (WN) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, asaltoasalto.bandcamp.com)

AWKWARD KISSER – Destructo-punk from Miami. A thin recording with loud dribbling vocals and a very improvisational feel. Repetitive, nasty, and uncaring. Sounds like a live set. Obnoxious…but so were the MEAT PUPPETS, FLIPPER, and the GERMS, right? (MA) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, no contact information)

BONEHEAD – *Finally Punk* – Killer lo-fi solo punk / pop right out of the '90s K catalog. Classic garage punk sneaks in, and it's easy to imagine this project expanding to something much greater than this (already great) run of 50 CD-R demos. For fans of: snappy and casually bratty punk-lite that you can (and will) dance to. (WN) (13-song CD-R, lyrics not included, crasslipsrecords@gmail.com, 14724 SW 86 Lane, Miami, FL 33193)

BRINE – *Kill the Ill* – Alternative / indie rock from Seattle. It has a distinct somber Northwest feel and the band is more than capable of playing and writing, but they never really break out of the light mid-tempo bubble here. (MA) (10-song CD-R, lyrics not included, invertedkite.com)

THE CAVEMEN – This package has dirt in it. The music is lo-fi, cling-clangy, and arty punk with psych moments. There are a few fun catchy garage rock tunes, but mostly I think this is purposefully obnoxious and weird. Some conceptual song titles like "Bones & Grease," "Band in B.C.," and "Ooga Boo" keep them dated in the Stone Age, but then again the liner notes indicate "TRACKLIST REDACTED." Certainly not made for "adult punks" like myself, but will maybe appeal to those of you looking for something to drool to. (MA) (14-song cassette, lyrics not included, paleoboys.bandcamp.com)

CITRIC DUMMIES – *Life Is So Horrifying* – Smart and fast punk shits from Minneapolis. Like DEVO and the SPITS and early KBD… yeah, doing the good things and not giving a shit. Midwestern punks deliver with creamers like "We're Gonna Borrow You Gear (Tonight)" and "Piss On My Brain." Don't stop. (WN) (8-song cassette, lyrics not included, citricdummies.bandcamp.com)

THE CRAY BAGS – *Beauty Love* – Choppy garage punk with jangly guitars and vocals drowned in reverb. Good build-ups, and an overall dirty feel, even when the sounds are sharp and clean. Fans of REATARDS and the like will be pleased. (WN) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, 79 Franklin Avenue #3, Brooklyn, NY 11205)

DADAR – This is excellent! DADAR is just one person named Piff and their home recording project. It's only three songs but each one is catchy, raw and energetic as fuck. DADAR incorporates elements of power pop but is purely punk through and through. The attention to detail and crispness of each song is completely outstanding. Sounds like an instant classic. It comes in a beautifully screen-printed cover. (GH) (3-song cassette, lyrics included, murungrecords.bandcamp.com)

DEEP CREEPS – Noisy, spastic hardcore with unintelligible growly vocals and even some sick breakdowns that seem like they could be the soundtrack for when an animated protagonist unexpectedly falls into a hole and ends up in a whirlpool of jolly but malevolent weapon-wielding whimsical beasts. Except you're a punk and you are in a mosh pit, and these beasts are your friends. And you are one of them. You try to wake yourself up from this horrifying nightmare, but no. Alas, it is the only reality. (HB) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included but recipe for vegan soup is, deepcreeps.bandcamp.com)

A DISCO FOR FERNS / THE IAN QUIET BAND – *Splitsville!* – Oh man, I feel like it's been ages since a new DISCO FOR FERNS release has passed through my hands ("new" being relative, this one is dated 2014 and seems to have languished in the *MRR* demo box for a spell). A bass / drum duo on this outing, more simple small town punk to go along with the piles of CD-Rs they have left in their wake over the years. It's amazing what you can do in a void. The IAN QUIET BAND make up the other half, two basses and an inaudible theremin creating a murky dark punk racket with AM radio vocals…and he rhymes "Louisiana" with "banana" right out of the gate, which is pretty cool. Mid-level horror / shock punk vibe. (WN) (8-song CD-R, lyrics not included, cusser56@yahoo.com, $5ppd c/o Joey, 11777 Brazos Way, Lindale, TX 75771)

DOXIE – *It Might Be Anything Else* – The band says that the title refers to the fact that DOXIE's songs are "easy" and basically sound like any other punk band. I suppose I can see their point, but what I hear are crazy catchy and enthusiastic sounds from an Italian band with a serious knack for writing good ass songs. First three DONNAS records, the GO-GOS, and fist in the air pogo punk? All in one fukkn band? Yeah, punks, sign this fella up because I am hooked. (WN) (8-song CD-R, lyrics included, doxie.bandcamp.com)

DROOL – Degenerate, noisy hardcore from Atlanta. Some parts bring to mind the static

uneasiness of a hovering swarm of bees. There are also some straightforward classic hardcore style riffs. Includes plenty of opportunities for you to alternately pogo and circle-pit. Lyrics about misanthropy, hating cops, and BDSM. (HB) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, thisismedancing@gmail.com)

DUDES – Garage punk with elements of psych thrown in à la HAWKWIND. Some of these songs lack the noisy, psych elements of the others and it feels like the band is just building on a riff that goes nowhere, making the songs a little monotonous and long. When they incorporate more noise and wildness it really builds up into exciting crescendos, creating tension. Overall, it's a strong release with few weak moments. (GH) (11-song CD-R, lyrics not included, dudesarebummed.bandcamp.com)

ESCORT – This is sick as fuck and the kind of hardcore that *MRR* creams itself over! Five songs in ten minutes, TOTALITÄR riffs! Check it out before the tapes even arrive like a real fucking millennial. Members of bands that don't sound like this. Will they set the roads G.L.O.S.S paved on fire? I hope so. (AT) (5-song cassette, lyrics probably included, escortpunx.bandcamp.com)

FATHERS DAY – *Life* – Adult bar punk with a parental theme. Elements of '90s Midwest garage punk like GAUNT, but with harsh and persistent vocals that negate any hook (or appeal) that the music packs. Full disclosure though: "You're Lucky To Be Eating At The Sizzler" is pretty damn funny. (WN) (12-song CD-R, lyrics included, fathersday.bandcamp.com)

FAULTFINDER – *In the Sweaty Grip Of the Moron* – I have a bit of a hangover so bear with me. Based on visual cues I guessed this was gonna be pretty emo. There *is* plenty of heartfelt screaming and samples from movies, but the overall feel is more like a spookier KARP. To keep the references close, it's got a little TIGHT BROS rock'n'roll to it too. I don't think that really conveys how enthralling this tape is; it's taking me back in time to when I was in basements witnessing freaks destroy / create / alter / save our own worlds several times a week. My world was much smaller then, but so much more inspired. Find them and follow them on their quest. I have no idea where it'll take you, but it seems like a good idea. Send me a postcard from the other side. (AT) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, $5 ppd, faultfinder.bandcamp.com, 710 Benton Boulevard, Kansas City, MO 64124)

FAUX DEPART – Debut banger from this French outfit featuring a member of (the excellent) TELECOMMANDE. Brilliantly snappy Euro punk with a distinctive US '80s flare (I'm thinking ADOLESCENTS, ZERO BOYS) and lots of full open chords from the just-jangly-enough guitar. Execution is stellar, and these punks are way beyond "demo" quality right out of the gate. Superb stuff, and I look forward to more! (WN) (10-song cassette, lyrics included, fauxdepart@riseup.net, fauxdepart.noblogs.org)

FRIENDSHIP – *I & II* – The first two self-released EPs of this extreme, brutal powerviolence outfit from Japan, re-released by Sentient Ruin. Features hypnotizing sludge breakdowns, feedback-as-an-instrument noise interludes, disorienting, psychedelic guitar tones, and bass that sounds like someone attacking a piano with a sledge hammer. All delivered with incredibly precise execution. A seamless combination of sophistication and unrelenting ruthlessness. (HB) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, sentientruin.bandcamp.com)

GRAVE MOSS – Theatrical-sounding deathrock from Denver. Horror-themed lyrics delivered in an overwrought manner. Sort of like an under-produced and more sinister *Beneath the Shadows*-era TSOL. The haunting fuzzed-out organ is the key ingredient here. Drags on a bit here and there but overall a cool sound and pretty interesting stuff. (MA) (8-song cassette, lyrics included, gravemoss.bandcamp.com)

HOLLY AND THE NICE LIONS – *Your Favorite Ghost* – Perhaps this Wisconsin trio falls more under the "Americana" umbrella than most of the punk acts featured in this rag, but the title track won me over with its proto-fuzz by way of ZIPPERS swing, and there are more than enough teeth in the mix to make the thing over on the right side of the fence. Moments of LONE JUSTICE (guilty pleasure, not ashamed) and LOST GOAT, and an overall ear for crafting a really, really good tune. I imagine this will be the last time HOLLY AND THE NICE LIONS see these pages, but let it be noted that I am glad they stopped by on their way to wherever they wind up. (WN) (12-song CD-R, lyrics not included, holly.trasti@gmail.com, 130 Gwynn Street, Green Bay, WI 54301)

INEPT / REGIRGISTATE – *Split L.I.P. to R.I.P.* – Collection of material from two mid-to-late '90s Raleigh, NC bands. INEPT does punchy hardcore punk from a time before everything had to be D-beat, UK82 pogo, youth crew, '80s USHC…etc. Just young drunk punks drawing from whatever influences were around them, musically and lyrically, resulting in a sound that's actually kind of hard to describe in today's very sub-genre-fied way of categorizing bands. REGURGISTATE is heavy and crusty, falling somewhere on the '90s spectrum between DYSTOPIA, FILTH, and HIS HERO IS GONE. Both of these bands remind me very much of my formative years, getting into punk and digging whatever records bands brought through in their small distros, many of which were by bands that are featured on the flyers on the layout of this tape. (MA) (16-song cassette, lyrics not included, $8 ppd, 3802 Lexington Drive D1, Raleigh, NC 27606)

JOY-RIDE – Fast and heavy shit that sounds like it was dropped straight out of the '90s. The kind of barking and in your face hardcore with occasional (brief) mosh parts to break up what is basically a nuance-free attack…but also free of pretension and bullshit. You know what you're getting right out of the gate with these Germans, and you get a lot of it. For punks who like to ignore the nonsense and get right to the meat. (WN) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, joyride.bandcamp.com)

LACE – *My Mask Is Off* – OOOOOOOHHH YESSSSSSS. This is what the kids like these days, and *this* kind of this is exactly why us old fukks should pay attention to what the kids like. No bullshit, blown to shit hardcore assault with heaps of those creepy crawl mosh parts that you know damn well your knees are too old to properly enjoy, and then the guitar breaks free and it's 19fukkn83 and you are going hard before the whole band drops back in and it's a howling distorted Oi! on crack disaster in the best possible way. Get down, you shit. (WN) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, calicogrounds@gmail.com, lacetx.bandcamp.com)

LAPIS – Self-described as anarcho / cold-wave sums it up pretty well. Simple open electronic beats and tones with both male and female vocals. Repetitive lyrics fit well in this bleak sonic scape. These locals haven't shown up on my radar yet, but next time I'm a little put off by the latest kinda liberal anti-Trump protest in the Bay I'm gonna mope (in that cool gothy way) my way over to a LAPIS show and remember the numerous times Oakland's rage has literally set the town and our hearts on fire. (AT) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, lapismusic.bandcamp.com, 27 Sunset Drive, Kensington, CA 94707)

LETHAL DOSE – Tight Oi! from Dallas. The guitar is mostly clean and vocals are burly so I can liken them to the TEMPLARS. "Thin Blue Line" and "Just a Reaction" are exemplary, catchy tunes, guaranteed to have the punx and skins uniting in any pit, and "Smash the KKK" puts an immediate halt to any sketchy speculation. The bass playing is especially notable. It's a winner. (MA) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, lethaldosetx.bandcamp.com, punkaliverecords@gmail.com)

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LITTLE TERRY – *Fur & Medication* – It's 2017 and people are still making folk punk. A man plays acoustic guitar and sings about drinking, relationships, life, the environment, and cats while he condescendingly tells a woman how to live her own life. Someone plays a fucking bongo drum. (GH) (8-song CD-R, lyrics not included, littleterry.bandcamp.com)

GARY LLAMA – *The Beauty Of Music* – Long active and extremely prolific one-man recording machine GARY LLAMA with another dose of weird home sessions. One unquestionably "punk" creamer, while most of the recording meanders in and out of other sounds: equal parts proto-grunge and / or '90s college rock with some really cool almost goth elements. Ironically, I preferred the two instrumental dub interludes to most of the actual "songs." (WN) (8-song CD-R, lyrics not included, gary@ovolrdebacklerecords.com)

METER FEEDER – *Decision To Steal the Hollywood Sign (Or: I Don't Need a Wildfire To Burn L.A. To the Ground)* – Hardcore cassingle with rolling (not rocking) pounding drums, driving and fuzzed bass, melodic and tang-y guitar, and confident, relentless barking vocals. I really like the forcefulness of their music, and I'm really drawn to their ability to have that while still managing to keep a sense of humor. These songs are a snarky commentary on what a lot of us experience in LA delivered in a precision blast of punk rock. I'm always really glad to hear powerful bands get their message across in a clever way. (MD) (2-song cassette, lyrics not included, meterfeeder.bandcamp.com)

NECROVECK – *Displace* – Midwest dad / bar punk, but apparently from the Bay Area. How do I describe a band that just sounds out of touch and uninteresting even though they are musically and technically competent? I assume there are DK and FLAG records in their personal collections, and at times during my listen I even thought "this isn't bad." I don't know where else to go, but NECROVECK is definitely "not bad." (WN) (6-song CD-R, lyrics not included, necroveck.bandcamp.com)

NOT A PART OF IT – *Don't Let the Bastards Down* – There's something about this that satisfies the teen part of me that used to drive around my small town blasting RANCID and STIFF LITTLE FINGERS, feeling tough as fuck. It has those kind of upbeat, catchy, CLASH-style chord progressions with raspy, rapid-fire, anti-establishment vocals. Definitely some LEFTOVER CRACK vibes happening here as well. This path is well traveled, but when it's done well, it's pretty damn satisfying. The ridiculous cover art has to be seen to be believed. (GH) (12-song CD-R, lyrics included, 1782 Sweetbriar Lane, Eugene, OR 97405, notapartofit.com)

OBSTRUCTION – Walloping hardcore from Dallas. Very POISON IDEA injected with the spirit of D-beat. After a highly rocking intro segment it's all cylinders firing, everything cranked, all the time. It's not about standout riffs but relentlessness and power. The intensity actually increases as the tape progresses, which helps in leaving a lasting impression. (MA) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, punkaliverecords@gmail.com)

OXIDANT – A quick and rough practice demo for tour (studio recordings coming soon) for this Raleigh, NC powerviolence band. Chugging buildups lead to completely manic, SPAZZ-like blasts with a deranged singer who sounds like they are running off the rails at all times. There's some dissonance in the guitars that break them away from the usual staid powerviolence tropes and lets them dip their toes into "noise-not-music" waters, but only briefly. Good shit. Side A is a practice space recording and side B is a live recording. (GH) (?-song cassette, lyrics not included, tolivealie@gmail.com, 2825 Van Dyke Ave, Raleigh, NC 27607)

PELVI$$ – *Hot For UFOs* – Grungy and bluesy rock with meandering guitars and off-key singing. Pretty uninspiring. (MA) (9-song cassette, lyrics not included, pelviss.bandcamp.com)

PERIOD BOMB – *Ovary Acting EP* – This incredible bunch of majority POC femmes from Miami make chunky rock music. Their picture on bandcamp makes me think they might be into Sailor Moon cosplay. The comparison to BIKINI KILL might be lazy but they have that kind of shouty breathy melodic burst feel that is unmistakable. I am also reminded of FREE KITTEN and PJ HARVEY because of the noisy and feedback-y deluge, but they are more ethereal and tuneful and less confrontational, and have a real rock edge. They have a beautiful toughness and even do a round in vocal harmony. They defy any real categorization. Highly recommended. Please tour! (JB) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, periodbomb.bandcamp.com)

PETITE – A righteous and aggressive street stomping *Oi!-de-vivre* from Portland. The PETITE tape ignites immediately with siren-like flares of BLITZ, the bolstering brutishness of CAMERA SILENS, and hints of deathrock (think BELGRADO). I am also reminded of Japan's the CREED— a harsh femme vocal attack and high guitars; stinging at times and hypnotizing at others. Simple but produced drums with bass lines that subtly nudge and supportively shove. Loving these riffs on "Soft Cop." Definitely feeling the vibes of an old favorite, IMPERIAL LEATHER. Excellent first offering from PETITE. Get this while you can in. Comes in a few colorways, with uniquely comical and slightly unsettling art. (JR) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, petitepdx.bandcamp.com)

POOL RULES – I really wanted this to be more interesting because the demo comes packaged in a small hardcover book of art and a small color photograph of the band, but the music is earnest, '90s style melodic punk in the vein of HOT WATER MUSIC / beard rock mixed with alternative rock radio. It's done well for that style, but I wanted all that shit to die the first time around. (GH) (5-song CD-R, lyrics not included, lastexitrecords.bandcamp.com)

THE RANDY BASTARDS – Capable and tame pop punk songs about women, love, more women and how punks smell bad. Somewhere between SMOKING POPES and the QUEERS. (GH) (10-song CD, lyrics included, therandybastards.bandcamp.com)

SEX SNOBS – Catchy as hell grungy punk from Oklahoma City. Legitimately nostalgia-inducing if you were around for the First Wave of Grunge. The real poppy parts bring to mind a more rough-around-the-edges version of the JESUS AND MARY CHAIN sound. Be warned: if you're vulnerable to this genre, you'll want to play it on repeat but it's only four songs. Also, according to the liner notes, one of these freaks' favorite flavors is watermelon. True freaks. (HB) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, sexsnobs@gmail.com)

THE SNAGS – *Four Things to Fight Against* – This starts off with a fairly simplistic approach to peace-punk featuring a heavily distorted bass, drums and a pissed singer. By the end of the demo they are slower, dissonant and drone-y…still simplistic, but more interesting and retaining more depth. It whizzes by but makes a mark. (GH) (4-song CD-R, lyrics not included, thesnagsband@gmail.com)

THE STUNTMEN – You know that kind of punk that is anti-establishment, anti-cop, loves drinking, plays a lot of bars, and sounds like they're just playing sped-up VAN HALEN and ZEKE riffs? That is this. They have no qualms about playing shows with the DWARVES, FANG and the MENTORS. (GH) (12-song CD-R, lyrics not included, facebook.com/olystuntmen, 10124 16th Avenue S, Seattle, WA 98168)

TALENTLESS HACK – *Rock N Roll Covers* – As clearly indicated by the title, you get a slew of four-track covers by a (not completely) talentless hack from Halifax. Some older bands like DEAD BOYS, the CLEAN, and MENTALLY ILL, as well as more recent stuff like ANNIHILATION TIME, REGULATIONS, and even CONEHEADS. The recording

quality is sweetly raw and has the right amount of both ineptitude and authentic-sounding snarl. Probably more fun for the creator than the listener, but could be useful for turning someone onto some cool bands or inspiring folks to do their own recording projects. (MA) (13-song cassette, lyrics not included, cody_cross@hotmail.com)

TEENAGE REMAINS – Straightforward and vicious punk'n'roll from St. Paul with a vocal attack that reminds me of Rob Vasquez (NIGHT KINGS, CHINTZ DEVILS). A perfectly raw four-track recording suits this tape very nicely, but unfortunately they already broke up. (GH) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, teenageremains.bandcamp.com)

TEMPLE STEPS / WRECK – Crushing, howling, meandering doom from TEMPLE STEPS (UK). Mindfuck psychedelic anguished doom from WRECK (Germany). (WN) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, templesteps.bandcamp.com, wreckdoom.bandcamp.com)

TEQUILA SAVATE Y SU HIJO BASTARDO – I'm not usually a fan of "one-man band" style punk, but I cannot deny that this release fucking rules. TEQUILA SAVATE is joined by HIJO BASTARDO (technically a two-man band here) to create raucous, pounding, CRAMPS-style garage punk with all the songs recorded way in the red. The drums on this are positively stomping, the guitar sounds huge and everything is played with a wild abandon that is so sorely missing in modern garage punk. Highly recommended! (GH) (7-song CD-R, lyrics not included, bangbangrecords.bandcamp.com)

TRUE SPORTSMANSHIP – There is a lot going on here. Heartfelt, angsty tracks that veer toward glam or indie rock. Also a few tracks with drums louder in the mix that recall more of a scratchy, urgent-yet-hopeful political pop punk sound. The singer has a very unselfconsciously dramatic quality that really sets this apart from other bands who maybe aren't as ready to just get out there and walk the damn walk. (HB) (9-song cassette, lyrics not included, truesportsmanship.bandcamp.com)

UWAGA – *A Peinie* – Drawn out French (scr) e(a)mo in the most classic traditions: equal parts MOHINDER and anguished European self-indulgence. Chaotic and energetic, with brutally harsh vocals that cut through every element of the mix. (WN) (5-song CD-R, lyrics included, uwagastrsbrg.bandcamp.com)

VOICE OF CROWS – To be honest, if I was forced to correctly sort between D-beats, powerviolence, blastbeats, grindcore, and some other subtle genre differentials I'd guess I'd fuck up at least half of them. Maybe that's my resignation letter? Regardless, this falls right smack in the middle of all of that, or maybe VOICE OF CROWS transcends all these sub-genres and just rips hard? I'd like to be able to read the lyrics to get a feel for things. I assume the songs are about the failings of capitalism, America, and humans in general. They do however state several times that they are *against* religious supremacy and are *for* love. Punks is hippies. Blastbeats and growls all over this tape. (AT) (11-song cassette, lyrics not included, voiceofcrows.bandcamp.com, 8530 Millersport Road NE, Baltimore, OH 43105)

ZINES

Send zines for review to PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146 USA. Include postpaid price within the US and internationally. We are always looking for multi-lingual zine reviewers who are based in the US. Write to ari@maximumrocknroll.com for more information.

(AB) Arielle Burgdorf
(AP) Ari Perezdiez
(DG) Dan Goetz
(DZ) Ryan Modee
(EC) E. Conner
(EW) Eli Wald
(JB) Julia Booz
(KS) Kenn Suto
(MM) Marissa Magic
(MR) Mikey Minicomix

BABY COFFEE #1
$3 / 8 pgs
The first installment of a pretty prolific series of zines edited by a NYC doula. This issue covers the period right before birth and preparation through the immediate post-partum period. Gives pretty realistic and straightforward advice and allows room for the unpredictability of birth and normalizing difficulties and roadblocks of adjusting to parenthood. Pretty extensive advice for both parents with an emphasis on support and community; a recommended read for people who are expecting. (AP)
babycoffeezine@gmail.com / koyukismothchildbirth.com

DEATH WOUND: CONSPIRACY ISSUE
$7.77 / 22 pgs
The bulk of this zine is made up of a present-day interview with the vocalist of Axegrinder and writing on conspiracy theories—the one-page "The Arrogance of Fools" discusses climate science denial. The layout is an absolutely beautiful, stark D-beat cut-and-paste style that has its own refreshing and relatively unique character. I've listened to very little Axegrinder, but this shotgun history lesson has piqued my interest, as any good interview should. "Threads," in a nutshell, is an in-depth pontification on the psychology, power, and limitations of conspiratorial thinking, both before and with the internet, and is one of the best pieces of writing I've ever reviewed for *MRR*. It looks like this zine has published a number of issues already, so it's time for me to catch up. (DG)
deathwound.com

DOUBLE DOWN #1
$3 / 62 pgs
This is a three-way split poetry zine between Sara Sandberg of *Double Ears* fame, Benjamin R. Taylor, and Jonathan Edward Sotelo. It's full-size with typewritten poems and a few drawings and images, touching on themes of isolation and injustice, absurdity and heartbreak. I'm not sure what to make of the alligator that fell from the sky, but I took a pause at the poem about aging but not giving up. It's the kind of writing where you can spend real time with it and find some insights but you could also look at it and wonder why they couldn't spice it up with more imagery. (JB)
PO Box 1791, Oakland, CA 94604

ÉCHATE FLORES: UN ZINE DEDICADO A LA SALUD MENTAL
$2 / 14 pgs
Spanish language perzine covering the personal battles of navigating and living with mental illness and working on ways to heal and sustain yourself. All handwritten with cute illustrations sprinkled in for good measure. A really visually pleasing and nourishing zine. (AP)
abrilajon@gmail.com

FLUKE #14
$4 / 42 pgs
Fluke is a large (8.5" by 11") black and white collection of show flyers from Little Rock, Arkansas spanning the years 1988 to 1992. Even if you have no relationship with Little Rock now or then (like myself) it's easy to appreciate this zine. The layout is clean and simple, the flyers are well reproduced, and it's just fun to flip through and enjoy the great effort put into each one. You get the well-known acts we all recognize (Green Day, All, Econochrist…) and the local ones that likely blipped in and out of existence. That's part of the appeal of preserving punk artifacts like this stuff: it's just friggin' neat to look back at. It seems like flyer compilation zines will continue to be a thing, even as we drift further and further into the age of social media show communication (I hope someone is screenshoting all those FB invites for posterity) and *Fluke* is a great model for future ones. (KS)
PO Box 1547, Phoenix, AZ 85001

GAME THEORY
$8 / 32 pgs
Here is a stunning chapbook by NYC painter and poet Winslow Laroache. While tackling a huge range of emotional subjects this work speaks to race, intimacy, representation, the impacts of white supremacist violence, queer safety, and black joy. While none of Winslow's paintings are included, the work is present in the words. Simple bright gestures that drag you with a slow weight. (EC)
brannyholmes@gmail.com

INDIGENOUS GOVERNANCE AND STATE AUTHORITY
$2 / 12 pgs
A short but brilliant interview with Guatemalan academic Gladys Tzul. She tackles the tensions around the neoliberal state in contrast to the preexisting modes of indigenous governance systems and uses work on power and colonialism by a mix of contemporary Marxist theorists and writers from Europe as well as Latin America. Looking past colonial politics Gladys explains how an autonomous network of communities has always been a present and breathing contribution to indigenous life and struggle and cannot be coded, defined, or co-opted by the liberal state. "State models have a premeditated goal of making people forget what struggles for territory have meant. There's a hegemonic project that is forced, and it's natural that there be

resistance. If that weren't the case, hegemony would have no reason to exist, imposing it wouldn't make sense." (EC)
liesjournal@gmail.com

MANIC ABSTRACT #1
$3 / 80 pgs
Full-size photocopied photo zine full of 35mm film captures. Sometimes a pile of money, or a girl in the middle of a pile of money, or a guy at a donut shop, or a brick wall. It's a lot of "moment" glimpses that start to tell a story as you pass by each one. There is a punk bent, either from pictures of bands performing or of a group of punk-dressed people either at a diner or posing in front of a dilapidated building front. A trip to Asia, pictures of food and pills, garbage piles, raw meat, and page after page of black and white landscapes and portraits. I prefer to have more commentary, but there are some genuine images here that speak very well by themselves. (JB)
manicexposure@gmail.com / manic-exposure.tumblr.com

MORMONS AT CHICHEN ITZA
32 pgs
What appears to be an obsessive archive of some eccentric pattern slowly emerges as an incisive portrait of violent white supremacy. Chichen Itza is a World Heritage Site made up of the ruins of a once giant Mayan city in Yucatan. While the city is a major tourist destination, receiving over 1.4 million visitors every year, Mormons make up a significant demographic. Some Mormons believe that Chichen Itza and other sites in Latin America are where the people spoken of in Mormon texts originated. It's a rampant obscuring of the still existing indigenous communities in this area. The zine's title is fairly indicative of its content. Every page is a digital portrait of Mormon couples and families in front of Chichen Itza's most famous pyramid. The only text in the zine ends "And the plain and precious truths started to be distorted." (EC)
sonnydownsnuff@gmail.com

NOT LIKE YOU #7
$4 / 38 pgs
This zine still looks like it was laid out in Microsoft Word, photo pixelation be damned, and I have to wonder why the proprietor behind a corporately-sponsored Chaos In Vegas skate punk reunion fest deserves to be interviewed, but there's actually a lot to pore over and enjoy about this issue. As with past ones, the interviews are split between people in the punk world and the skating world, and always do a good job of delving into a given subject's history. It's cool to see skaters like twenty-year-old Justyce Tabor interviewed alongside the founder of Nimbus Skateboards talking about his skate crew misadventures in NY and NJ in the '80s. On the punk side of things, John from Give talks about the band's (and his) history and philosophy, and also hints at some upcoming hardcore history projects he's involved in, which were news to me, and sound quite cool. Some decent record reviews appear about halfway through, which include dinosaur bands' current releases along with a few good current ones. (DG)
102 Richmond Avenue SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106 / notlikeyourecords.com

PARANOIZE #42
$2 US, $3 world / 16 pgs
With the exception of a few record reviews, this zine is entirely New Orleans focused, and reads like it caters primarily to locals. Interviews with AR-15, Recluse, Something's Burning, Space Cadaver, and Ekumen all follow a similar format of simple, broad questions, and seem to focus on crust / grind and related subgenres. The scene report is simply a list of bands, genres, and their websites, along with a few venues and record stores. Definitely useful if you're a local who's into what they cover, or an out-of-towner wanting to check things out. (DG)
PO Box 2334, Marrero, LA 70073, paranoizenola.com

A PERFECT DAY FOR SCOTTIE PIPPEN
$2 / 20 pgs
A Perfect Day for Scottie Pippen is a small format, black and white zine telling a first person narrative about someone sitting in their apartment with their cat and then journeying down to a basketball court and hanging out with Scottie Pippen. Mr. Pippen then tells a story about turning into a pharaoh when he was on the drug X. I like the format of this zine, the simple layout, the font, the minimalist cover, the inclusion of the photo of Scottie Pippen, the general feel of the writing, and that it appears to be set in Oakland (I'm biased, duh). That said, I feel like the magical realism / absurdist aspects of the story don't really work out for me, and I don't feel like the ending was really earned. Still, if you keep reading something over again and trying to deconstruct it then it's worth reading. Besides, I feel like this writer has something good to offer (I've never read any of his stuff before) and I'd like to see more zines—like this—that use the format for short stories. (KS)
steveorth25@gmail.com

POINT OF INTEREST #17
$2.50 / 70 pgs
Not sure if I'd call it a comeback, but this is this zine's first issue after a fifteen-year hiatus. Most of the content is "best of" interviews and artwork from prior issues, leaning heavily on *Profane Existence* and associated bands and people, and a lot of the politics and aesthetics definitely show their age. I hope these people are over consumerist politics and white dreads by now. Some of the more current content includes interviews with the organization Trans Punks, the label Organize and Arise, the long-running band Armistice, and a few wordy and rambling columns. (DG)
PO Box 4026, Renton, WA 98057

RAZORCAKE #97
$4 / 112 pgs
Hey, so Todd, it's cool that all the featured musicians in this issue are women, but this shouldn't be unusual at this point. But pointing this out and then going into three paragraphs about how your mother and grandmother are your life's central female figures? It's a bad look, though I suppose acknowledging their emotional labor is something. This seems to be the first post-inauguration issue, and there's a general "where do we go from here?" sentiment in the columns and the rest of the intro. The interviews with Michelle Cruz-Gonzales (who should've been on the cover) and Allison Wolfe were both great to read, and in both cases it was cool to see their pasts connected with their present lives, which I feel is not always the case when people in well-known and long-defunct bands are interviewed. Bad Cop / Bad Cop are a more recent group that gets a decent interview that looks at their life as a band. Nardwuar's interview with Psychic TV is transcribed here, and whether you love him or hate him, I don't think his video schtick translates well to print. Other than that, the usual stuff. (DG)
razorcake.com

SHORT EYES: BLOODSTAINS ACROSS REAGAN'S COFFIN
$10 / 32 pgs
For being a minimally-formatted reprint of a tour diary originally published on *Terminal Boredom*, this is a damn good read and more than worthy of its zine-ification over a decade later. The print version also expands on some of the stories and adds photos that further illustrate the already incredibly graphic tour tales. *MRR*'s own Mitch Cardwell documents the sole US tour of Short Eyes, a garage band from Oakland who existed for less than a year in 2004. Plenty of on- and off-stage funny antics, gruesome carnage, fireworks, room-clearing sets, fried food, and more, along with the tedious bullshit that comes along with tour. Also comes with a tape of the original recording they sold on tour, along with a live recording in Louisiana. Completely unrelated fun fact: the drummer of this band reviewed at least two LPs for *MRR* at the wrong speed, erroneously comparing both to Man Is The Bastard. (DG)
thelokilabel.storenvy.com

SHUT UP AND LISTEN #2–5
$3
Two cool girls from Bloomington, IN are the tastemakers behind *Shut Up and Listen* fanzine. It's just eclectic enough to cover most forms of underground music, with a heavy focus on femme-produced art and culture, to not fall in step with *Rookie Mag* or its older stepsister, *Sassy*. The idea is to center the work of young and vibrant femme artists and their collaborators with emphasis on the personal and the weird. The covers are all in color and there are tons of cute and cool illustrations and very short interviews with the likes of Princess Nokia, Amy O., Madeline Robinson, the Paranoyds, and Boytoy Putty. Recommended. (JB)
shutupandtalktous@gmail.com

SLINGSHOT #123
free / 19 pgs
I'd imagine that many *MRR* readers are familiar with this long-running Bay Area anarchist newspaper (which will turn 30 next year!). As always, there are a lot of contributions that touch on various local and global struggles, including writing on Standing Rock, coups in Brazil, Milo getting run out of Berkeley, the Knowlesville Community Land Trust as an example an alternative to renting or buying a house, an in-depth guide to becoming an abortion provider, and a piece called "compost rape culture" that offers all-too-familiar stories of guys being disgusting creeps and survivors not being taken seriously, along with examples of constructive things to say for those who want to be supportive (which should be everyone). Find it at your local infoshop. (DG)
PO Box 3051, Berkeley, CA 94703 / slingshot.tao.ca

TOILET PREZ #1 & #2
$3 / 32 pgs
At first I thought this comic was a commentary on Trump, but the cartoonist totally goes in all these random wacky directions with the whole thing. The main character is President Toilet. It is somewhat crudely drawn without using too much detail or heavy blacks, some photo-collage. When I saw this comic, I immediately thought of Orson Wagon's *Happy Toilet*, the story of Happy Toilet and his side-kick Bidet. President Toilet seems like a fledgling effort of a genuine weirdo. It is definitely only very loosely a commentary on our prez, but in a somewhat harmless farcical way, that jumps off in random weird directions into bizarre lunacy. There's something to be said for that! It is not particularly well drawn, but it looks like there may be some room for improvement. I've definitely seen worse (and better). If this comic has a selling point, it's the abstract lunacy that spews forth. I kinda love nutty stuff like this, and wondering what the cartoonist who made it is like in their personal life. My biggest critique besides the loose drawings is that the artist doesn't always make the best use of space. (MR)
1227 N. New Hampshire Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90029 / toiletprez@gmail.com

TOLEDÖ PONKERÖS #4
$1 / 50 pgs
This Toledo-focused zine has been doing a great job of shedding light on local talent with extended and conversational interviews that are worth reading. Most of this issue consists of an interview with local artists Rob and Vivian Morrison about punk and art and the way they intertwine in their lives, along with a few of each of their pieces. Solo noise artist Rosebud also gets asked who he is, and more, and the sole non-locals represented here are Gasmask Terror. Keep up the good work! (DZ)
lcodrnr@hotmail.com

THE TROUBLE WITH NORMAL #146
$2 / 44 pgs
Hot friggin' dog, this is a long running zine. This issue has the usual show reports, including performances by the Hanukkah Jones Band, the King Khan and BBQ Show, Pokey LaFarge, and many others. There's also an interview with the band Mirror Mirror, a piece on the break-in at Columbia, MO venue Cafe Berlin, a photo essay of the Women's March in that city, record reviews, and a rumination on where protesting goes in Trump's America. If you've read *The Trouble With Normal* before there's nothing here that breaks the mold, just the continuing in-depth coverage of shows (including grainy photos of bands that are kind of charming) and simple layout and construction that you might expect (as well as some frankly distracting sentence structure problems that caught me off guard). If you care about the Columbia / St. Louis region or have enjoyed this zine in the past, pick it up. (KS)
PO Box 1444 Columbia, MO 65205 / ttwn@hotmail.com

UNLOVABLE ME
$2 / 40 pgs
Unlovable Me feels like a milkshake. It's so thick and sweet, full of poems about the corporal experience of queer love. The heartbreak of what happens when expectation of reciprocal care collides with the truth of how white supremacy and patriarchy plays out in our most intimate relationships. It's a meditation, on self-love and radical vulnerability. Beautiful illustrations pepper the pages. "Become the boyfriend you've always wanted." (EC)
darcycrashdistro.tumblr.com

UNVERIFIABLE COMICS #1
$2 / 16 pgs
This person makes comics that are like newspaper comics. All single panel stuff. They kinda look like the cartoons in magazines at the dentist's office. Scribbly, but intelligible. Thick lines, no detail or backgrounds really. The humor is hit or miss. I do appreciate that this issue has a lot of commentary on our new führer and the election. The content is absurdist, but soft, considering the current state of things in this country. But at least it's taking a stab in a political direction, and that seems like a bit of a departure for this cartoonist, whose

humor has mostly been just kinda wacky up until now. Considering the level of effort other people in the game have put in, I have to give this comic a so-so rating. (MC)
PO Box 345, Putney, VT 05346

VISCERAL PATOIS, VOL. 1
28 pgs
This is definitely a zine-y zine. It's like Dadaist poetry / stream of consciousness writing paired with a lot of found images and a couple of drawings. Some of the drawings and whatnot were glued onto the pages themselves. The writing itself is alright; the prose is good, and they chucked a bunch of ten point words in there, but it's a flow of consciousness as opposed to someone presenting a point or making a particular statement. The drawings are noticeably different from the photocopy zine art type pictures. The selections the author makes are good for this sort of thing. I don't know if it has to have a point to be good; that is art, writing, storytelling, etc. I kinda like to know where people are coming from, so I like when there's some sort of statement. I could pull out one box and show you at least ten zines similar to this one—they aren't re-creating the medium or anything, but it also isn't like they made any such claim. For the kind of zine it is, *Visceral Patois* picked some good words and writing to string together. I'd like to see more original drawing / doodling in their next installment if there is one, but that could just be the cartoonist in me. (MR)
sspacesaugagess@gmail.com

WHITE PRIVILEGE IS A MISNOMER ROOTED IN ERASURE OR WHY WHITE PEOPLE "DON'T GET" WHITE PRIVILEGE
$1 / 1 pg
This short essay makes the argument that the term "white privilege" as used in our society has reframed things back onto white people, instead of focusing on the suffering inflicted on people of color. Instead, the author argues white people have white *supremacy* not white *privilege*. The whole piece is short and to the point, and its brevity gives it extra power but there's obviously a lot there to unpack and consider. Spend a dollar, order this zine, read it, and discuss it among your friends—especially if you're a white person (like me) who benefits from white supremacy and the term "white privilege" is bantered about a lot in your life. Highly recommended. (KS)
brannyholmes@gmail.com

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METALLEG / ANIMAL SHOW
MAY 13 @ EL CORTEZ
GO BETTY GO / THE DOLLYROTS
LES SANS CULOTTES / DEBBIE DOWNER
MAY 19 @ SUNNYVALE
GIUDA
BABY SHAKES
JUNE 9 @ BROOKLYN BAZAAR
CONFLICT
CITIZENS ARREST / ALL TORN UP / (A) TRUTH
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SHEER TERROR / THE BRASS
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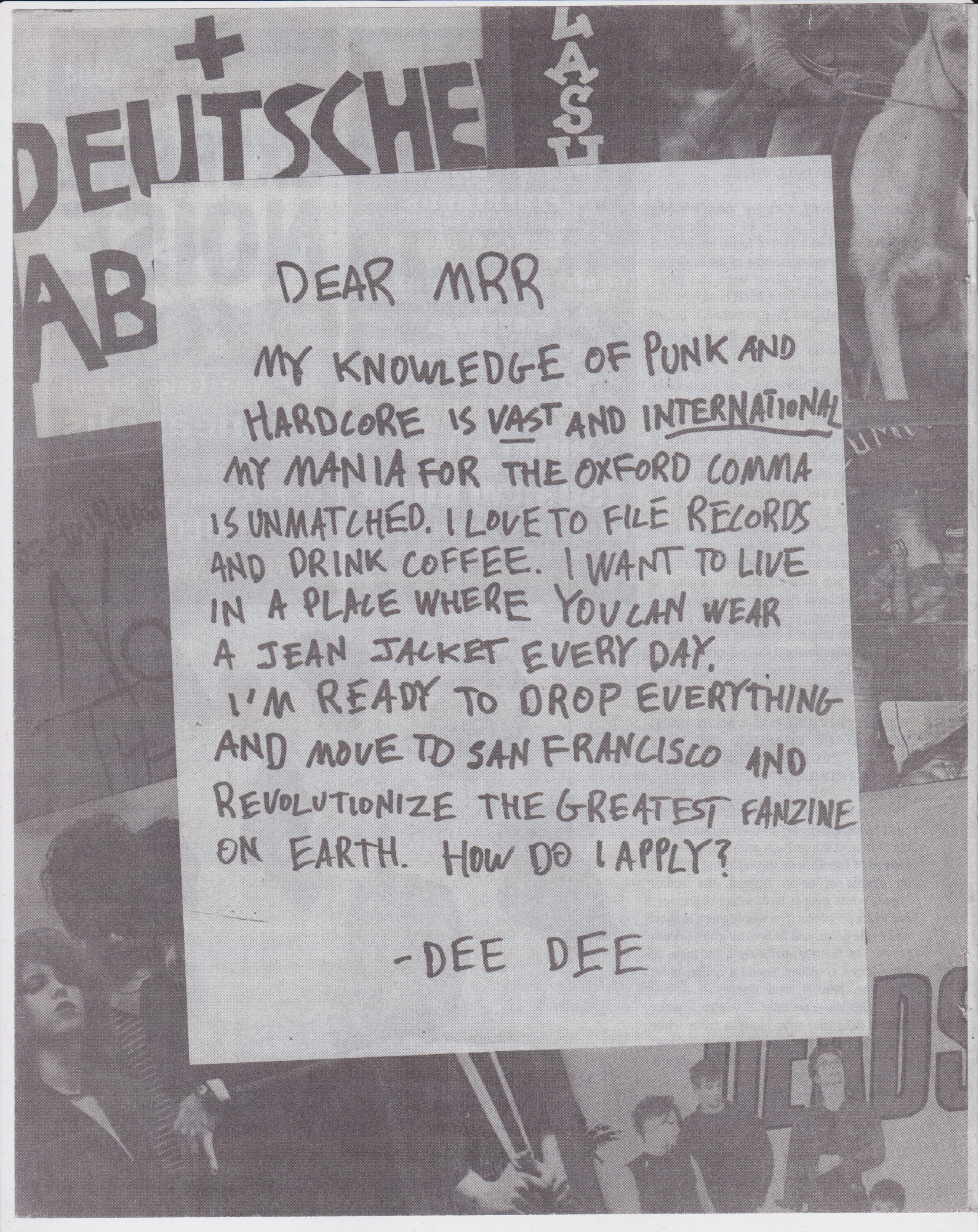

DEAR MRR

MY KNOWLEDGE OF PUNK AND HARDCORE IS VAST AND INTERNATIONAL MY MANIA FOR THE OXFORD COMMA IS UNMATCHED. I LOVE TO FILE RECORDS AND DRINK COFFEE. I WANT TO LIVE IN A PLACE WHERE YOU CAN WEAR A JEAN JACKET EVERY DAY. I'M READY TO DROP EVERYTHING AND MOVE TO SAN FRANCISCO AND REVOLUTIONIZE THE GREATEST FANZINE ON EARTH. HOW DO I APPLY?

-DEE DEE